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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Central Committee

Minutes of the Fiftieth Meeting

Geneva, Switzerland

26 August - 3 September 1999



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Central Committee of the World Council of Churches

Minutes of the Fiftieth Meeting

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World Council of Churches

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LIST OF CONTENTS

OPENI	NG ACTIONS
I	Worship
II	Call to Order
III	Roll Call and Seating of Substitutes
IV	In Memoriam
V	Agenda and Timetable
VI	Minutes of Previous Meetings 6
VII	Appointment of Committees 6
VIII	Applications for Membership and Affiliation
IX	Membership of Central Committee
X	Membership of Commissions and Advisory Groups 8
XI	Public Issues
XII	Bylaws of Commissions; WCC Constitution and Rules 9
XIII	Stewards
THE G I II III IV	RTS OF THE MODERATOR AND OF ENERAL SECRETARY Report of the Moderator 11 Report of the General Secretary 17 Discussion of both Reports 23 Response of the Central Committee 25
EIGHT	H ASSEMBLY EVALUATION
·	Presentation and Discussion
	YEAR PROGRAMME PERSPECTIVES EE YEAR PLANS Presentation and Discussion
	MINARY REPORT OF FINANCE COMMITTEE RATOR

PUBL	IC ISSUES	. 43
I	Minute on Nigeria	
II	Minute on Jerusalem	
III	Minute on Indonesia	. 46
IV	Minute on Peace and Reconciliation	
	between Ethiopia and Eritrea	. 47
V	Memorandum and Recommendations on Response to	
	Armed Conflict and International Law	. 48
AFRI	CA PLENARY - Journey of Hope	. 59
REPO	ORTS FROM COMMITTEES	
	Report of the Finance Committee	. 66
	Report of the Nominations Committee	. 75
	I Appointment of Commissions and Advisory Groups	. 76
	II Appointment of Other Groups	
	III Bylaws of Commissions	
	IV WCC Rules	
	V Staffing Report	. 81
	Report of the Programme Committee	. 84
	Report of Policy Reference Committee I	. 99
	Report of Policy Reference Committee II	108
EVAL	UATION of this meeting	116
DATE	S OF FUTURE MEETINGS	118
CLOS	SING ACTIONS	119

APPENDICES

I	Attendance: List of Participants
II	Membership of Committees
III	Bylaws of Commissions
IV	Memorandum of Understanding between the Standing Commission on Faith and Order and the Executive Committee of the WCC
V	Africa: Challenges for the Ecumenical Movement
VI	Decade to Overcome Violence - Message, Letter, Basic Framework
VII	Budget for the year 2000
VIII	List of Documents Available on Request

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Minutes of the Central Committee Meeting

26 August - 3 September 1999

OPENING ACTIONS

I. Worship

The Opening Worship and daily Morning Worship services took place in the Chapel of the Ecumenical Centre; they were planned by a group of staff led by Rev. Myra Blyth and Rev. Terry MacArthur. On Sunday 29 August, participants were invited to attend worship services in local congregations; a number of them were offered the opportunity to preach or to bring a message of greeting.

At the Opening Worship on 26 August, the sermon was preached by WCC President Bishop Federico J. Pagura.

II. Call to Order and Welcome

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram I, called to order the fiftieth meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches at 11.00 hrs on Thursday, 26 August 1999.

His Holiness warmly welcomed the members of Central Committee to this first full meeting of the Central Committee, the first session in Harare having been very brief. He noted that their predecessors had met in the past to deepen and strengthen the fellowship to which they and we were committed in the World Council. The challenge today was to continue with renewed faith and hope the commitment to further deepening and enriching this ecumenical fellowship.

Referring to the first morning session in which a process of community building had begun, the Moderator encouraged members to continue the process of getting to know one another better, as well as learning more about the Council and about the churches from which others came. Such knowledge would generate mutual responsibility and accountability - the sustaining powers and guiding principles of our ecumenical fellowship.

III. Roll Call and Seating of Substitutes

The General Secretary called the roll of Officers, Presidents and members of the Central Committee. Apologies for absence had been received from several

members whose churches had not been able to send substitutes, including Rt Rev. Dr Barry Morgan and Rev. Dr Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere.

The following substitutes were agreed and seated as voting members:

Mr Andrei Dan Apostu, Orthodox Church of Czech Lands and Slovakia, for Ms Iveta Starcova;

Bishop Simeon of Maranska Lazne, Orthodox Church of Czech Lands and Slovakia for Very Rev. Dr Krystof;

Ms Melinda Mousmie-Oosman, Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean for Archbishop Rémi J. Rabinirina.

The following were appointed as substitutes during the course of the meeting:

Mr Gaby Habib for Fr Leonid Kishkovsky - Orthodox Church in America (30 August - 3 September)

Bishop Rolf Koppe for Rev. Dr Margot Kaessmann - EKD (30 August - 3 September)

Rev. Robert Welsh, Disciples/USA for Dr Bernice Jackson, UCC/USA (2-3 September)

OKR Tim Kuschnerus for Bishop Wolfgang Huber, EKD (2-3 September) Mr Stig Utnam for Canon Trond Bakkevig - Church of Norway, (3 September) Rev. André Spivey for Bishop McKinley Young, African Methodist Episcopal Church, USA (3 September).

The General Secretary drew attention to the presence of Msgr John Mutiso-Mbinda and Msgr John A. Radano, delegated observers of the Roman Catholic Church, to whom he extended a particular welcome. Dr Emilio Castro, former general secretary, was also welcomed as a guest. Dr Raiser then invited Delegated Representatives and Delegated Observers, Advisers, and Observers to stand and be recognised.

IV. In Memoriam

During the Opening Worship, a moment of silent prayer was observed in memory of a number of persons who had been close to the life of the WCC and the ecumenical movement who had passed away since the last meeting of the Central Committee:

The Rt. Rev. J. Henry Okullu, Bishop of the Church of the Province of Kenya (Anglican) and one of the outstanding ecumenical leaders from Africa, died in February 1999 at the age of 70. He had served on the Council's Central and Executive Committees from 1975 to 1998 and was moderator of the Communication working group from 1975 to 1985.

Dr Aaron Tolen died in April 1999 in Yaoundé, Cameroon. A political scientist, he was committed to ecumenism. While secretary for Africa and Madagascar for the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), he began his association with the WCC, serving initially on the the executive committee of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, and subsequently as moderator of the Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development. From 1983 to 1991 he was a member of the Central Committee. As one of the presidents of the WCC, 1991-1998, Dr Tolen represented the WCC at many major meetings.

Dr Anwar Barkat died in Pakistan in April 1999. He served as associate director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey from 1968 to 1970 and was moderator of the International Affairs Committee of the Christian Conference of Asia. From 1975 to 1980 he was a member of the WCC Central and Executive Committees, and was appointed moderator of the Programme Unit on Justice and Service. Dr Barkat joined the WCC staff in 1981, serving as director of the Programme to Combat Racism until 1985.

His Holiness Karekin I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, died in June 1999 in Etchmiadzin, Armenia, aged 66. He was an ecumenical pioneer in the Middle East and served as president and later as honorary president of the Middle East Council of Churches. In 1968 he was elected to the Executive and Central Committees of the WCC and also served on the Faith and Order Commission. From 1975 to 1983 he was Vice-Moderator of the World Council of Churches Central Committee. His Holiness Karekin I was a prolific writer and orator, and a firm believer in the unity of the church in the service of the human community.

In 1995 he was called by the Armenian Apostolic Church to Etchmiadzin to lead the process of restoration and renewal of the Church after decades of a hostile political system. His unceasing efforts to shape a new generation of leaders who would be able to give direction to the Christian community in responding to the challenges of the present moment would remain a hallmark of his life of service. Bishop James Edward Lesslie Newbigin, an ordained Presbyterian minister, died in January 1998. He was a member of the Student Christian Movement and, as a missionary of the Church of Scotland to India, he played a significant role in the discussions leading to the formation, in 1947, of the Church of South India (CSI). Lesslie Newbigin was one of the CSI's first bishops, serving from 1947 to 1959 in Madurai. In India he was involved in theological education and in the creation of the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary. He played a key role in drafting the Message of the Amsterdam assembly and in organising the theological input for the WCC's second assembly at Evanston, USA in 1954. He used his intellectual abilities and diplomatic skills to achieve the successful integration of the WCC and the International Missionary Council at their assemblies in New Delhi in 1961.

Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, who died in April 1998, was a founding member of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement which campaigned for the end of South Africa's racist political system. As a young Church of England priest, he was sent to South Africa in 1943 and put in charge of the Anglican missions in two of Johannesburg's black townships. In 1956, he was forced to leave South Africa because of his incessant challenges - from the pulpit, in the courts and through the press - to the racist regime's policies. But he remained a steadfast campaigner against apartheid. He was mentor to many leaders of the liberation movement, most of whom now occupy leading positions in all spheres of public life in South Africa. Archbishop Huddleston deeply influenced the work of the WCC in its struggle against racism and apartheid, and was a strong "ally" of its Programme to Combat Racism.

Rev. Dr Donald English, a leading British churchman who made an outstanding contribution to British and international Methodism, died in Oxford in August 1998. He was World Methodist Council chairman from 1991-96 when he became honorary president. He made an immediate impact on a world audience through the Bible studies he presented at the 13th World Methodist Conference in Ireland in 1976. After being a Methodist tutor at Trinity College in Eastern Nigeria, he spent six years as a minister in local churches before returning to theological college life. He served as general secretary of the church's Home Mission Division until he retired in August 1995.

Rev. Jaime Wright, former collaborator with the Commission of the Churches

on International Affairs in Brazil, died in May 1999. An educator, administrator, journalist and leader in the area of ecumenical relations and human rights, he became coordinator of the Ecumenica de Serviço (CESE), and facilitated the publication of 1.8 million copies of an ecumenical and educational edition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He was a founding member of the Pastoral Association of Consolation and Solidarity of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) and president of the Association for Peace and Justice in Latin America (SERPAJ). In 1985 he published a 12 volume "encyclopedia" on a project called *Brasil: Never Again*. Jaime Wright was General Secretary of the Iglesia Presbiteriana Unida do Brasilo from 1977- 1993.

Rev. Sun Ai Lee-Park died in Korea in May 1999. A well-known Asian feminist theologian, she was the founder and editor of the magazine, *In God's Image*, which welcomed contributions from Asian feminists as well as feminists from other parts of the world. Ms Park was the programme coordinator of the Asian Womens Resource Center, first based in Hong Kong and later in Seoul during the late 1980s and early 1990s, and was an active member of the Women's Theologian Association in Korea until her illness in 1994. Sun Ai Lee-Park was married to Rev. Park, Sang-Jung.

V. Agenda and Timetable

The General Secretary presented the revised agenda and schedule for the meeting, drawing attention to a number of innovations. The agenda was divided into four sections - plenary introduction to the work to be done, a deliberative session focusing on Africa, committee work, and reporting back to plenary. As a result of the Council's new structure and the fact that its work was no longer based on a unit system, unit committees were no longer required. Instead a series of committees would deal with specific tasks as follows:

- -- Programme Committee (new),
- -- Finance Committee (as before);
- -- Nominations Committee to deal with the appointment of commissions and working groups at this meeting (any continuing work in this area would probably be dealt with by the Executive Committee in future);
- -- Policy Reference Committees two separate groups with specific agendas;
- -- Public Issues Committee (as before).

The revised agenda was adopted.

VI. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The General Secretary explained that, according to the Council's normal procedures, it was necessary to ask this Central Committee to approve the minutes of the final meeting of the previous Central Committee of 11-19 September 1997. With the assurance that no objections had been received, the Central Committee voted, with some abstentions, to **approve** the minutes of the 1997 meeting.

With regard to the brief meetings of this newly elected Central Committee held on 11 and 12 December 1998 in Harare, Zimbabwe, the General Secretary reported that he had received a letter from Bishop Barry Rogerson explicating more fully his intervention in relation to the appointment of the Faith and Order Standing Commission. The matter had subsequently been discussed by the Executive Committee at its meeting prior to this Central Committee.

In consultation with the Officers and with Bishop Rogerson, and in order to avoid possible misunderstandings, it was proposed that the text of Bishop Rogerson's comment be attached to the minutes of the Executive Committee for the record. A memorandum of understanding between the Faith and Order Commission and the WCC Executive Committee had also been drawn up setting out the procedures for nomination and election of members of the Faith and Order Commission for future reference (see Appendix IV).

Bishop Rogerson affirmed his agreement with this proposal.

No further corrections having been received, the Central Committee approved the minutes of its meetings on 11-12 December 1998.

VII. Appointment of Committees

A document had been drawn up in consultation with member churches and other ecumenical bodies, indicating the proposed membership of Committees of the Central Committee. The Executive Committee at its meeting in March 1999 had appointed, subject to approval by Central Committee, persons to act as moderators of these sub-committees. At its meeting immediately prior to this Central Committee, it had reviewed the proposals for membership of these Committees and recommended that they be approved.

Membership of the following Committees was proposed: the Programme

Committee, the Finance Committee, the Nominations Committee, Policy Reference Committees I and II, and the Public Issues Committee. The Central Committee was invited to give its approval to the proposals.

With a few changes, the Central Committee agreed to the proposed allocation of members to these Committees (see Appendix II).

VIII. Applications for Membership

It was reported that the Executive Committee had recommended that the Anglican Church of Korea be accepted as a full member church of the WCC. This church had previously been a member of the Council through the See of Canterbury, but had now become an independent Province of the Anglican Communion, and as such was eligible for membership in the Council in its own right.

Further, the Swiss Council of Christian Churches had applied for recognition as an associate council of the WCC.

These applications were referred to Policy Reference Committee I. At a later session, Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, reporting on behalf of this Committee, moved that:

- the de facto membership of the Anglican Church of Korea be now recognised by the Central Committee as full membership of the church in the World Council of Churches;
- the Council of Christian Churches in Switzerland be received by the Central Committee as an associate council of the World Council of Churches.

The Central Committee voted in favour of accepting the Anglican Church of Korea as a full member church, and the Swiss Council of Christian Churches as an associate council of the World Council of Churches.

Representatives of the two bodies were invited to stand and be welcomed into the fellowship of the World Council of Churches.

IX. Membership of Central Committee

At its meeting in March 1999, the Executive Committee was informed of the resignation from the Central Committee of Ms Susan J. Bazzana of the Anglican Church of Australia. It was agreed to invite Rev. Erica Mathieson, from the same church, to replace Ms Bazzana. The Central Committee voted in favour of this appointment, and Rev. Erica Mathieson was welcomed as a member of the Central Committee.

X. Membership of Commissions and Advisory Groups

The General Secretary referred to a document which resulted from a long consultative process involving the member churches and ecumenical partners. Considerable effort had been made by the staff teams concerned to observe the required balances with regard to gender, region, confession, and so on. The lists had been reviewed by the Executive which recommended their approval by Central Committee.

Although the Programme Committee could appoint the advisory groups, it was the task of Central Committee to appoint the members of Commissions. It had therefore been decided to take all the lists together. These would be referred to the Nominations Committee which would deal with any requests for changes and bring revised proposals back to Central Committee for approval.

Rev. Kathryn Bannister regretted the low percentage of young persons included in the lists, noting in particular that no young person had been nominated to the Special Commission. How would the next generation have opportunity to get to know the issues and to meet others involved if they were not represented? She felt there was a tendency to leave the naming of young people till last and then they were required to fill more than one category, which often meant they were not included at all! She appealed to the Nominations Committee to consider where young people might find a place in the Council's work.

Ms Arola supported this appeal, noting that although the Council was committed to a representation of 20% youth, these lists included only 7%.

Rev. Arne Fritzson expressed appreciation for the presence of advisers representing people with disabilities and asked that place be given to them also on each commission and advisory group.

XI. Public Issues

The General Secretary introduced a paper indicating procedures for public issues. It explained how Central Committee dealt with issues of public concern, making the procedure transparent and accessible to all, while developing a certain discipline. Proposals for action were normally presented at an early session, having been approved by the Executive. Central Committee members could then suggest additional items which they felt required urgent consideration or action by the Council. The Moderator of the Public Issues Committee, Canon Trond Bakkevig, together with the Officers, would consider such suggestions and bring back a proposed agenda for the work of the PIC, to be affirmed by Central Committee.

A booklet, "The Role of WCC in International Affairs" had been circulated to members for reference.

In considering a possible agenda for Public Issues, staff had felt that rather than suggesting statements on particular areas of concern, it would be important for Central Committee to consider in greater depth issues regarding international security and the ecumenical response to armed conflict. A memorandum on this subject, with a set of recommendations, had been considered by the Executive and was being shared with Central Committee for comment. A revised text would be brought back for action at a later session.

XII. Bylaws of Commissions; WCC Constitution and Rules

The General Secretary drew attention to a series of documents that had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. The WCC Constitution and Rules had been acted on by the Harare Assembly, but as a result of its actions in relation to the Constitution, it was necessary to revise the language of the Rules. The Executive had affirmed this, but the revised text required the confirmation of Central Committee by a two-thirds majority. This would come back for action at a later session.

Bylaws relating to International Affairs, the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, and Faith and Order had existed previously but some changes were required to bring them in line with the revised Rules.

In relation to Mission and Evangelism, the former Commission was being reconstituted, as well as the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism. A

new text had been prepared drawing on the historic text and integrating a set of bylaws for the new Commission.

A new Commission on Ecumenical Formation was being appointed, for historical reasons. The WCC had brought together the two movements on Life and Work and Faith and Order; in 1961 the International Missionary Council and in 1971 the World Council of Christian Education had integrated with the WCC. These earlier groupings each had a related commission, with the exception of Education. A new text had therefore been prepared to bring it in line with the other commissions.

These texts had been checked with the WCC's legal advisers and were compatible with each other while reflecting the different histories. They required confirmation by the Central Committee to become valid. Meanwhile they would be referred to the Nominations Committee.

XIII Stewards

The Moderator welcomed the group of 39 stewards from 38 countries.

Rev. André L. Spivey addressed members of Central Committee on behalf of the stewards, recounting something of the stewards' activities since their arrival in Switzerland. They had begun with an exposure programme, spending time with host families in four different cities and surrounding areas. This contact with families and local churches had provided a social, cultural, political, economic and spiritual look at Switzerland.

An ecumenical formation seminar followed, giving them opportunity to look at the wider area of ecumenical learning and training of future leaders, and helping them come to a greater understanding of other cultures and faiths.

After introducing themselves, the stewards presented roses to the youth members of the Central Committee. Their presentation ended with a song:

"Together towards tomorrow, we stand, we say, we sing; together towards tomorrow, whatever the future brings."

REPORTS OF THE MODERATOR AND OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I. Report of the Moderator¹

The first part of the Moderator's report has traditionally provided an outline of the decisions of the Executive Committee and of the Officers in the period since the last meeting of the Central Committee. This time a separate Report of the Officers was sent to members in advance. (See Appendix VIII - Documents available on request; and Minutes of Executive Committee, 16-19 March 1999.)

The Moderator began by referring to the Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, noting that it marked an important point in the history of the ecumenical movement. It had strongly reaffirmed the churches' commitment to "being together", "working together", "building together" and "moving together". Harare would remain a major point of reference, and its evaluation and implementation would become an ongoing process. The immediate task of the Central Committee was to establish a new agenda for the Council by identifying priority areas, and to set the direction for the coming period.

The second part of the Moderator's report contained some reflections on "The Nature of our Fellowship: From an Open to a Responsive Church". After many years of *christocentric* ecumenism, the last decade had witnessed the emergence of *ecclesiocentric* ecumenism, and he believed that ecclesiology would remain at the heart of the ecumenical movement in the next century. The fundamental ecumenical question for today was: what did it mean to be a church in a changing world? The ecclesiological discussion that had been taking place in the Council in recent years must continue with new vigour and be placed in a holistic perspective covering all aspects of the Council's programmatic and relational activities.

The church, being an integral part of society, could not remain unaffected by the changes taking place in the societies around it: it must be in constant interaction with the world. It must therefore search constantly for more relevant modes of being church and new models and forms of articulating itself. The "being" of the church was conditoned by its "becoming"; it became a community of faith

¹The full text appears in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol.52, no.1, Jan. 2000.

through its response to the challenges and needs of the world with the inclusive vision of the Gospel.

A common ecumenical vision implied a common vision of church, for without this common vision the ecumenical movement would remain a closed circle. As we begin a new period in the history of the World Council, we must challenge the churches to constantly reassess, redefine and reaffirm their specific vocation in the context of rapidly changing societies; secondly, we must explore together the most efficient ways to build fellowship among the churches at every level.

Towards Fellowship-Building: Our Ecumenical Vocation

According to the CUV, the essential identity of the Council was "a fellowship of churches" - it worked with and for the churches. But what did this mean actually? The ecumenical movement involved the churches in a fellowship of interrelation and interaction, the nature of which implied mutuality. In this fellowship the churches interact; they engage in dialogue by sharing their varied resources. This "horizontal" mutuality must be accompanied by "vertical" mutuality - by mutual up-building, for the up-building of the Kingdom of God started with the up-building of one another, and through each other, of the one church of Christ.

The Moderator went on to discuss ways in which the Council - as an instrument at the service of the churches - could help them enter into a meaningful and mutual up-building, interrelation and collaboration. In view of changing realities and conditions, was it not time for this instrumental role of the Council to be redefined? In the past perhaps the Council had not listened sufficiently to the churches or engaged them actively in its work. Thus its work had become less relevant to the life of the churches, opening a gap between them which must be remedied. Harare urged the Council to seek new ways of articulating the concerns of the churches more accurately, leading to questions such as: to what extent can we involve the member churches in the life of the Council? How can we ensure the churches' ownership of the Council's work? This meant exploring *how* to do our ecumenical work rather than being concerned with *what* to do.

The Council's identity was neither in its programmes nor in its structures, but in the togetherness of the churches. Its fellowship character transcended its institutional form and instrumental function. We do not *have* a fellowship: we *are* a fellowship. The Council is the structural manifestation of our togetherness.

At Harare the churches reaffirmed their commitment to the fellowship, but were raising questions concerning the nature of their fellowship. Deepening, renewing and strengthening our fellowship should remain a major goal for the Council. Its primary purpose was to call the churches to "visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship" (Constitution, III). Hence we must move from *consensus-oriented* ecumenism to *fellowship-building* ecumenism.

The WCC is a fellowship of *churches* - that is an irreversible reality. Our relations with ecumenical partners - including those Christian groups and movements which, while not members of institutional churches, were deeply committed to the Gospel - must be based on mutual trust and respect. And the Council must be ready to help churches evaluate their relations with people of other living faiths by moving to creative and critical dialogue rather than passive tolerance.

In Harare we celebrated the joy of our togetherness by reaffirming our commitment to stay together. What were the implications of our being together in this fellowship? The goal of visible unity had brought the churches together, and continued to hold us together in our common ecumenical journey. Our fellowship would lose its integrity if its goal of visible unity was not anticipated by missionary engagement and translated into common witness. We must not neglect the concrete realities of the world and fail to respond to the needs and concerns of the churches and societies. "What we can do together" must acquire predominance over "what we are together"; doing things together would help build our fellowship on a firm foundation.

The churches were affected by the changing realities and need to discuss their problems: surely the Council was the place to engage in debate on issues that separate us but which concern us all? Acting together did not mean agreeing on all matters. The *raison d'être* of our fellowship was acting together, responding together in faithfulness to the Gospel and our common calling. The urgency of common witness was greater today than ever before, which meant that we make more solid the common ground of our fellowship, always seeking new and more holistic ways of acting together in faith.

From Acting Together to Growing Together
Acting together implied growing together; growing together implied acting

together. In Harare we affirmed not only that "we intend to stay together", but also that we are "restless to grow together in unity". The World Council is a fellowship where the churches grow together "on the way" towards full and visible unity. Our common witness must be determined by building fellowship, and our fellowship must be undergirded by common witness. Being together did not mean being identical, but it did mean growing together - and that meant deepening what we are and becoming what we should become together according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Surely then, continued the Moderator, the WCC was a growing conciliar structure, providing the churches with an institutional framework and theological processes for conciliar interaction, collaboration and growth. With the active participation of churches around the world, and all the global networks of ecumenical partners, were we not experiencing the "foretaste" of conciliar fellowship?

The Legacy of the 20th Century for the Ecumenical Movement

For the churches, this great turning-point of history would be an occasion for thanksgiving and prayer; it should also be an opportunity for self-critical assessment and renewal. What lessons would we take with us to the next century in the context of our ecumenical journey? The Moderator went on to pinpoint some of the major challenges of the 20th century for the ecumenical movement.

Predominance of Anthropocentrism

The major achievements of the 20th century had brought with them a strong anthropocentrism, an approach which had penetrated most domains of the life of society, including the spiritual domain. The rights of the individual were founded on liberal and secular values and had primacy over spiritual and ethic values, especially in Western societies. This had aided the resurgence of sectarian religious movements and the rise of new cults at the expense of institutional churches and traditional religions. But the more humanity dominated the creation, the more it accelerated the process of earth's destruction and human self-annihilation. Issues related to the *humanum* would be, in the Moderator's view, of decisive importance for the coming century. Faith and Order and the Theology of Life process should help the churches and the ecumenical movement to tackle these issues in the right perspective.

Ethnicity: An Unresolved Issue

Ethnicity was the source of some of the most complex problems of the 20th century, and had far-reaching consequences. There was reason to believe that, unless its root causes were seriously addressed by the international community, ethnicity would continue to threaten human rights, the safety of societies and the integrity of creation. Religion and ethnicity were closely interrelated, hence ethnicity was raising critical questions for all religions. Many of our churches had faced and would continue to face situations where they were caught between the imperatives of the Gospel and their ethnic ties and obligations. The ecumenical movement must engage the churches, at all levels, in a comprehensive discussion on ethnicity and its implications on the role of the churches in society.

Emergence of a New Value System

The ethical foundations of our societies had been shaken, and the world had been invaded by values that were jeopardising the dignity of the human person, the integrity of creation, the credibilty of religions and the future of humanity. Power had become the absolute criterion of human life, and the world was in a moral vacuum. For many decades, the Council had given priority to social issues, but the time had come for ethical issues to occupy an important place on its agenda. A global framework of values must be urgently developed, capable of holding societies together. This could not be done by globalisation which destroyed ethical and spiritual values by promoting its own values. Only a global ethics could sustain our morally decaying culture, our ecologically deteriorating environment, our spiritually disintegrating social fabric. How could religions together promote ethical values that would generate humanisation and reconciliation? The ecumenical movement must take up this challenge also.

Dialogue or Conflict between Civilisations

In many parts of the world religions and cultures had become sources of tension and conflict and were being used to promote ethnic and political ideologies. Globalisation was introducing Western liberal values that were theatening coexistence, local traditions, cultures and communities, sometimes clashing with cultural and religious values that were deeply rooted in the life of the people. How could we promote dialogue among cultures to ensure the harmonious coexistence and peaceful integration of liberal and conservative values? There was a growing tension between liberal anthropocentric and conservative theocentric values which had become integral to the cultures we come from.

Religions could be used to dramatise hostile stereotypes; they could also play a pivotal role in establishing channels of communication and bridges of reconciliation between hostile communities. This potentially ambiguous role of religion must be taken seriously. The ecumenical movement had provided the context for a creative dialogue between cultures and traditions, and its unique role must acquire focal attention in the coming century.

Humanity had been promised a "new world order" with less injustice, less hunger, less violence. But in the approach to the next century, we were witnessing more injustice, more poverty, more hatred and more violence - the 20th century was drawing to its close in global disorder. Imperialism, racism and colonialism had almost disappeared, yet they were emerging in new forms in different parts of the world. Science and technology had brought unprecedented progress and security, yet we were heading into the next century with more uncertainty and insecurity. The world was more than ever ecologically, economically, politically, morally and spiritually fragile - the 21st century would inherit a disintegrated world.

Hence, the world must change. For Christians, change meant renewal and transformation in the perspective of the Kingdom of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit. The 20th century caused the world to live under the fear of nuclear destruction. To avoid moral and ecological destruction, the next century must cause the world to live under the fear of God. The broken world needed repentance and forgiveness, healing and reconciliation, justice and peace, and, above all, *hope* for the future.

A Journey of Hope

Harare proclaimed "Rejoice in Hope", and in its Message affirmed that "we journey together" as people of God. In a world shattered by violence, dominated by poverty, injustice, nuclear threat, and ecological crisis, how can we rejoice in hope? Yet, we will rejoice in hope in our journey, by making God's love visible to our neighbour, by giving bread to the poor, justice to the victim of injustice, by becoming peacemakers. We will rejoice in hope by becoming a living message of hope, by witnessing in life and in deed to the Gospel of Christ, and growing together on the way to visible unity. This is our common calling, our God-given mission in Jesus Christ.

The Moderator went on to enumerate a number of problems and challenges still facing the Council, but stressed that our journey was one of hope in faith, moving forward in faith and with a clear vision in the midst of uncertainty and tensions. Without vision, the ecumenical movement would lose its spiritual power, and in spite of setbacks, it would not go back but must move forward.

We recognise that the sea on which the ecumenical boat is sailing is stormy, with winds blowing from all directions, from inside and outside our fellowship. But had the ecumenical ship ever sailed smoothly? A new kind of ecumenism was emerging since Harare - one that was self-critical and responsive, reaching out to the people of God. We must explore together new ways of living ecumenism, and new forms of expressing it, with hope and patience, with mutual understanding and solidarity.

The ecumenical movement was entering a period of renewal and transformation, ready to open itself up to new horizons. In the midst of contradictory signs of ecumenism, we must discuss the kind of ecumenical vision which permeates the entire life of the churches and articulates itself with a broader perspective. The Council was called to develop a new ethos and operate on the basis of a new structure, new programmes, a new style and new methodologies. Harare gave us the vision, showed us the way and provided a framework to move forward on the path towards common witness and visible unity. We must be ready for the unexpected, for the good surprises of the Holy Spirit as well as for the bad surprises of the "powers and principalities" of the world. But empowered by the Spirit and sustained by the common vision, we were firmly committed to continue together our journey of hope.

II. Report of the General Secretary²

The General Secretary began by welcoming participants to the Ecumenical Centre and to Geneva; in particular he greeted those for whom it was their first visit, and he assured them that "this house is your house"! The agenda for this meeting had been formulated in such a way as to help members familiarise themselves with the structures and procedures of the WCC and with their responsibility as members of Central Committee. The session on community

² The full text appears in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol.52, no.1, Jan. 2000.

building had included an introduction to the new organisational arrangements of the Council. Any comments and suggestions for improvement in the conducting of future meetings would be welcomed.

The changes to the Constitution and Rules adopted at Harare had introduced a clear division of responsibilities between the Central and Executive Committees. The CC should be the place where the character of the WCC as a fellowship of churches finds continuous expression. Its agenda should provide space for deliberation and be responsive to concerns raised by member churches. Its decisions, prepared by the committees, should concentrate on matters of policy. The Executive Committee would be responsible for administrative supervision and monitoring of the ongoing work, while remaining accountable to the Central Committee.

Evaluating the Assembly

The first task of this Central Committee would be to evaluate the Harare Assembly, and thus to lay the foundations for a post-assembly agenda. Staff had prepared a document drawing on the evaluations received from assembly participants. Although the assessment of the assembly had on the whole been positive, inevitably there were criticisms about a number of points. The Executive Committee had studied these, making a number of recommendations for consideration in preparing for the Ninth Assembly.

While many underlined the clear resolve "to stay together" as one of the main results of the assembly, others felt that the assembly had avoided facing the real issues and conflicts, that the price of "staying together" was too high. There had been so much preoccupation with internal matters that the opportunity to provide a clear orientation for the ecumenical movement at the threshold of the 21st century had been missed. Some felt the assembly responded to the African context and some of the major issues in the right way, while others felt it had remained too general in its statements and avoided speaking clearly enough about the pressing problems of justice and human rights; others regretted that central themes regarding Faith and Order and mission and evangelism had not appeared more visibly on the plenary agenda.

A more fundamental question was emerging here: how to assess the so-called "crisis of the ecumenical movement" and the future role of the WCC. Debate had

centred round the proposal for a "Forum of Christian churches and ecumenical organisations" on one hand, and response to concerns expressed by the Eastern Orthodox Churches on the other. While the decisions of the assembly indicated that there was no turning back from the affirmations of the CUV policy document, there was still a considerable difference of opinion as to its true significance and implications.

A fundamental question had become: What is to be the role of the assembly in the life of the WCC in the future? If the WCC is to be understood as a fellowship of churches committed to stay, move and grow together in a situation where they encounter profound differences of culture and tradition, how can the style of work of the assembly reflect this understanding more adequately? The concept of "padare" was an attempt to respond to this, and was the most significant change introduced at Harare, taking the place of the earlier thematic sections.

However, a more penetrating reassessment of the concept and role of the assembly may be called for. The last such evaluation was done as part of the report of the Structure Committee in 1971. Some tentative suggestions for a possible new form of an assembly were circulated to the churches for response as part of the first CUV draft document in 1996; the reactions affirmed the continued need for an assembly every seven years. The WCC, as is the case for most of its member churches, cannot take its constitutional continuity for granted, and an assembly is necessary when the WCC as a fellowship of churches periodically reconstitutes itself.

Dr Raiser pointed to two further reasons for a reassessment of the concept and role of the assembly: the first related to the area of communication which had received many critical comments. The assembly as a whole should be seen as a communication event, and the process of the assembly should foster communication of the member churches among each other. How can an assembly become an event and a resource for a self-reliant form of communication which focuses on connecting different life stories rather than on controversies, which invites participation in an ecumenical dialogue on themes and crucial questions rather than only reporting and evaluating the results?

The second reason was related to the wider network of ecumenical partner organisations, especially Christian World Communions and Regional Ecumenical

Organisations, which share a large part of their membership with the WCC. They were also constitutionally required to hold assemblies at regular intervals. This led to an uncoordinated succession of international ecumenical gatherings with a similar structure, parallel themes, and the expectation that the churches become actively involved in preparation and follow-up. Churches belonging to two or more of these ecumenical bodies were finding it increasingly difficult to respond to the multiple demands on their human and financial resources. The CUV document and actions by the Harare Assembly had raised expectations among some of the larger churches and partner organisations that the WCC might take the lead in initiating a fresh dialogue about a closer link between these different structures. Most recently the concern had been raised by the Council of the Lutheran World Federation which proposed seeking possible ways of coordination with regard to future assemblies of these two bodies.

It would therefore seem appropriate for the Central Committee to initiate a process of reflection on the nature and purpose of the assembly against the background of the considerations arising from the CUV process and the Harare Assembly. A report should be brought to Central Committee in 2002 at the latest so that its recommendations could be taken into account in approaching the WCC's Ninth Assembly.

Looking Ahead

Besides evaluating the Harare Assembly, the main task of this meeting of Central Committee was to consider the post-assembly agenda. The framework was provided through the reports of the Programme Guidelines Committee and the two Policy Reference Committees, although pressure of time did not allow for a discussion of the recommendations in detail or to discern the implications for the Council and the wider ecumenical movement. During the past months, the staff, the Executive Committee, and a core group of the Programme Committee, had engaged in a process of interpretation, discernment and planning. The framework of proposals emerging from this process would be presented to Central Committee prior to going into committee work to prepare recommendations for action.

The General Secretary then focused on the recommendation introduced into the text of the Programme Guidelines report from the floor of the assembly, viz: the proposal to proclaim the period 2001-2010 an "Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence". The commitment to overcome violence and build a culture of peace

may be the prophetic witness which the churches have to render at a time when the struggles for power and resources, identity and sheer survival in a globalised world seem to result in a generalised culture of violence. The proposed Decade was more than a social and political programme of the Council. Overcoming violence was an urgent task to be addressed by those committed to building and reconstructing inclusive and sustainable, just and reconciled communities. This was an essential part of what it meant to be the church in the 21st century. The proposed Decade therefore goes to the heart of our vocation as a fellowship of churches.

The Decade to Overcome Violence would build on the experience gained through the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, and on lessons learned during the JPIC process. It followed on the Programme to Overcome Violence, initiated at the Central Committee in Johannesburg in 1994 and carried out in part through the Peace to the City Campaign which culminated at Harare. A dynamic and still growing network of ecumenical partners engaged in local initiatives to overcome violence had already been established and would be a vital resource for shaping the Decade. In addition, the UN had proclaimed the same period as a "Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World"; this would offer links to parallel initiatives on the level of governments and the wider civil society.

The WCC must find ways of involving its member churches in the process from the start, as a common effort of the churches and the wider ecumenical movement. The text of a letter and a message to member churches had been drafted for discussion in the Programme Committee and appropriate action by CC.

The concern for violence/non-violence was central to the conflict surrounding the Programme to Combat Racism in the 1970s. In 1968 the Uppsala Assembly had responded to Martin Luther King's non-violent struggle for social change by initiating a study process on "Violence and non-Violence in the Struggle for Social Justice", which had been received by Central Committee in 1973. In 1990, the Seoul World Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation formulated a commitment "to practise non-violence in all our personal relationships, to work for the banning of war as a legally recognised means of resolving conflicts, and to press governments for the establishment of an international legal order of peace-making". The commitment was underlined and

strengthened in an act of covenant "for a culture of active non-violence which is life-promoting and is not a withdrawal from situations of violence and oppression, but is a way to work for justice and liberation". While the Canberra Assembly hesitated to reaffirm this conviction, the Central Committee in Johannesburg responded strongly to the appeal of Bishop Mogoba to launch a programme to "combat violence".

The General Secretary went on to enumerate a number of events that had subjected the ecumenical commitment to peaceful resolution of conflict to a severe test: the 1994 genocide in Rwanda; the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina marked by the practice of "ethnic cleansing"; the termination of the UN peace mission in Somalia; and more recently the Kosovo conflict and the military intervention by NATO. Many questions were raised in this period with regard to the role of the church in international affairs, (see minutes of CC 1995, 1996), including the development of "criteria for determining the applicability and effectiveness of sanctions".

The Decade to Overcome Violence must find ways of addressing and exposing the "spirit, logic and practice of war", and must open the space for learning and teaching the art of peace-making. The effort to build a culture of peace had to be rooted in an understanding of power as a resource for the life of the community which would increase as it was shared. Peaceful resolution of conflict was possible only as the win-lose matrix was transformed into a dynamic where both sides emerge as having won. This had implications also for our understanding of justice. Much of the ecumenical discussion had been shaped by a punitive concept of justice aimed at establishing right and wrong at the expense of promoting justice in the sense of healing and restoring the life of the community. Too often the appeal to justice and the law had been used as a political instrument to punish those perceived to be the enemies instead of promoting justice as the cooperative effort to resolve a conflict or heal the wounds of history.

The Harare Assembly had shown that the confrontations and conflicts - which were likely to increase as we move into the 21st century - were present in the midst of our ecumenical fellowship. We could not treat the challenge of violence only as problem in the world around us. We must acknowlege that our theological traditions and the structures of power within our own communities have helped to shape the world's attitudes, and may themselves be part of the problem

we are trying to address. It was one of the painful insights of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women that violence against women, for example, is a reality in many of our churches, often justified with theological or cultural arguments. The Decade to Overcome Violence would thus oblige us to enter into a self-critical assessment of those theological, ecclesiological or cultural traditions which tend to justify violence in the name of defending order and enforcing obedience.

Concluding, Dr Raiser spoke of the decisive moment that had been reached in the long and controversial ecumenical debate on violence and non-violence, war and peace, justice and reconciliation. It was his hope and prayer that, as an ecumenical community, we would be able, through this Decade, to render a faithful witness to the one who is our peace and who has broken down the dividing wall of hostility. For "he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God" (Eph.2:17ff). That is central to our vocation and a strong reason for the hope that is within us.

III. Discussion of both Reports

Speakers expressed appreciation for these reports, some making reference to a specific point or adding further comment. Others went into more detail on a particular issue.

Eden Grace referred to the dissatisfaction expressed by many at Harare - especially among the youth - with the way decisions were made in the Council. Was the model adopted for the WCC in 1948 still seen as the only model for the Council today? In May 1999, US youth delegates and stewards met to reflect on the future of the World Council, and agreed to send a message to Central Committee calling on it to reform the Council's decision-making process in order to reflect better the qualities of a Spirit-filled Christian community.

She agreed with the Moderator's caution against becoming preoccupied with institutional form and technical process: "The focus of our attention must be participation, not decision-making." Eden Grace therefore proposed that a comparative theological study of the varieties of Christian decision-making

models be carried out. Once we had gained an awareness of the connection between the will of God and the will of the meeting, we would be equipped to move together towards a new decision-making model for the Council. She understood this issue came under the mandate of the Special Commission but felt its reach was wider than that. Expressing hope that such a study process on decision-making might be carried out, involving participation of all member churches, she suggested that the Society of Friends might have some useful insights for the Council in this process.

Responding, the Moderator reaffirmed the importance of the decision-making process in which we must engage ourselves through the work of the Special Commission. He stressed that this Commission would not be confined to issues related to Orthodox/WCC relations but should go beyond that, addressing issues that touch the whole life and witness of the Council.

Bishop Serapion referred to the Moderator's remark about developing a common view of what the church is "beyond our ecclesiological and dogmatic teachings". Were we not challenged by the new ecumenical vision to rediscover our ecclesiology? He believed that the patristic heritage of the early undivided church should be our guide in articulating our common vision of what the church is. The WCC should take this heritage seriously as well as the experience of the early undivided church in moving together, building together and growing together. Secondly, before calling on all religions to develop together a global framework of values, Christians should first develop a Christian global ethics, a common Christian value system.

The Moderator responded that his question was: how, in the midst of the ecclesiologies we have, could we together reach a common vision of the church? - not a common ecclesiology. This was the ecumenical challenge that had to be wrestled with. On the issue of identifying our common ethical ground: since we come from different cultures and church backgrounds, we have different views and positions on moral issues. Before engaging in dialogue with other religions, therefore, we need to identify, deepen and widen our common ethical ground.

Fr George spoke of the journey of hope as we approach the new millennium. A sense of urgency characterised the Gospel of Christ, which meant that all that we do must be done with a sense of eschatalogical urgency. An eschatology of

humility and hope must be developed. The Christian vision of the end of the world was not the only such vision - we must share it with those of other cultures and learn to affirm life, justice and peace in humility and hope.

Responding to a request that more emphasis be placed on the importance of inter-faith dialogue, the Moderator felt this was no longer a conceptual notion but a reality of existential nature and scope. The question was how to make it a creative and critical dialogue, helping us to discover our identity in Jesus Christ, the integrity of our Christian witness and diakonia?

Several speakers made particular reference to globalisation. If Christ were to be seen as the answer to the moral decay in the world, he must remain at the centre of ecumenism; not shut within the church but given to the world through the lives of people. Clearly the debate on globalisation must be continued with renewed emphasis, bringing together our experiences and perspectives, our churches and regions.

Canon Trond Bakkevig agreed with the need to take christocentric ecumenism to the world; to recapture christological and theological language. Renewal lay in our ability to combine the older ecumenical language of christocentrism with the modern language about the mission of the church.

Bishop Aldo Etchegoyen felt that the two reports provided a valuable analysis of the situation through which we were passing at the end of this millennium. In particular, he noted that the Moderator had highlighted the value of the human person and the problem of the exercise of power; while the General Secretary had concentrated on the problem of violence. In Latin America this tension was clearly experienced - the continent was subject to unjust economic powers which controlled their countries as well as their fragile democracies, especially through foreign debt. Power was not only an economic problem but also a human and theological one. When would the churches stop sustaining a system of violence that created so many victims? This unjust situation must be carefully examined.

IV. Response of the Central Committee

At a later session, Rev. Kathryn Bannister presented the report of Policy Reference Committee I:

a) Report of the Moderator

The PR Committee received a summary of the comments from the small groups and chose to concentrate on the issue of the nature of our fellowship as WCC. The remarks of the Moderator regarding the emergence of an *ecclesio-centric* ecumenism should not be understood as a shift away from christocentrism. The centrality of Christ for our fellowship was implied in our current emphasis on ecclesiology. The PR Committee wished to affirm strongly the importance of the ecclesiological discussion. There were still significant differences among the member churches, but the Council was not just a programme agency - it was a fellowship of churches on the way to visible unity and full *koinonia*. All the various programmes and activities of the Council in the coming years should affirm the goal of building this fellowship and this community of churches within the WCC. Strengthening and deepening the fellowship was both a task and a way of carrying out the work.

The PR Committee recommended, and the Central Committee agreed:

- 1. to **request** that a report be given at its next meeting on how the building of the fellowship was included and expressed in the programmatic activities of the Council;
 - a) that this report include an assessment of whether the activities of the WCC were being undertaken with new methodologies which more directly engaged the churches and strengthened our fellowship for witness and service;
 - b) that this report also include an assessment of whether adequate resources were devoted to the goal of "strengthening and broadening the fellowship" over the coming seven-year period;
- 2. to receive with appreciation the report of the Moderator, expressing gratitude for the way in which it had brought out some of the crucial issues facing our fellowship.

b) Report of the General Secretary

The PR Committee I recommended, and the Central Committee agreed:

1. to **receive** with appreciation the report of the General Secretary, expressing gratitude for his leadership and vision in setting the post-Harare agenda of the Council.

The PR Committee received a summary of the comments from the small groups and decided to focus on the issue of assemblies. The PR Committee welcomed and affirmed the direction suggested by the General Secretary in relation to the assembly and underlined the need for the process, shape and style of work of future assemblies to reflect the priority of fellowship among the churches.

The PR Committee recommended, and the Central Committee agreed:

- to request the General Secretary to initiate a process of reflection on the nature and purpose of the assembly against the background of the considerations arising from the CUV process and the Harare Assembly, and to bring a report to the Central Committee in 2001;
- 3. that this process of reflection involve a wide constituency, including assembly delegates not serving on the Central Committee.

The PR Committee heard with interest the decision of the LWF Council to study the possibilities of coordinating future assemblies with the WCC and other Christian World Communions and regional ecumenical organizations.

The PR Committee recommended, and the Central Committee agreed:

4. to request the General Secretary to convey the interest of the WCC to work together with the LWF (as well as with other Christian World Communions and Regional Ecumenical Organizations) on the coordination of future assemblies and to explore together the possible areas of coordination for the next assembly.

Responding to a question, the General Secretary said that the LWF was the only world communion to have officially requested the Council to enter a dialogue about closer coordination of work. It would be necessary to explore in practice what "coordination" might mean. There was no intention so far to merge assemblies, but CWC general secretaries felt it would be helpful if the themes of the various asemblies were to complement one another, and that the different bodies should avoid addressing conflicting requests to the same member churches.

ASSEMBLY EVALUATION

Mrs Justice Adinyira, presiding, invited Dr Marion Best to introduce the process of evaluation of the Eighth Assembly. After referring to the brief video shown at an earlier session, Dr Best invited participants to share briefly with each other the main points they had taken home and told others about on their return from Harare.

Dr Best pointed out that the recommendations of this Central Committee would provide a framework for the document prepared on behalf of the Assembly staff by Ms Jean Stromberg. Some issues on which the Executive Committee had already expressed itself included the decision to shorten the assembly to 12 days (from 15) due to the change of venue; the logistical difficulties encountered with the university of Zimbabwe; the stressful conditions under which staff had to work; the limited time available for pre-assembly visits; the fact that the local churches did not really own the assembly in spite of the large number of African visitors who attended.

Other questions raised for discussion included: Did the desire to stay together result in the assembly avoiding real issues and conflicts, such as pressing problems of human rights, especially in Zimbabwe? What should be the role of the assembly in light of the WCC in the future? Perhaps Central Committee might consider initiating a reflection process on the nature and purpose of an assembly and report back in 2002 in time to make recommendations for the Ninth Assembly?

A lengthy discussion took place, during which a number of points were made

Rev. John Roberts was struck by the style of meeting of the assembly in contrast to that of the Women's Decade Festival where business had been carried out in a more relational style which helped build relationships. He expressed particular thanks to Ms Gnanadason and her team for the well-presented report shared with those who attended the Festival.

Several speakers mentioned the stress that staff had been under, both in Harare and currently in view of the restructuring and downsizing. They were grateful for the way staff had coped with the difficulties they faced, and urged that a clear

sense of direction be given to help them continue their work in spite of the limited resources available.

With regard to the **Hearings**, it was felt by many that too much time had been spent on evaluating past work and not enough on discerning directions for work in the coming period. The latter process was made more difficult by lack of time as well as by the procedures, and Dr Granberg-Michaelson urged that a recommendation be added to include a criterion dealing with directions for future work, while criteria for evaluation should be related to the CUV and its implementation.

Rev. Erica Mathiesen stressed the importance of having clear criteria to evaluate and review the past work of the Council. She felt justice had not been done to this task in Harare. As to the second stage of the Hearings, there had been a useful discussion and some good ideas were offered - but the process did not allow for these to shape future work except in the most general terms and any clear sense of priority was lost. She urged that the assembly be allowed to play a more meaningful and accurate role in shaping the Council's future.

Regarding the **Padares**, many people were confused because of the wide variety of possibilities available from which to choose. What was really the focus? (See also under report of Policy Reference Committee II).

A number of speakers affirmed the importance of **pre-assembly programmes**: PAYE continued to be a powerful tool for the preparation of younger participants. Visits by delegates in the region prior to an assembly should be encouraged. Others also stressed the importance of team visits and regional meetings, as well as of the pre-Assembly Women's and Youth meetings.

Many speakers said how much they had appreciated the opportunity to get to know their African brothers and sisters as well as to learn something of their culture and art - this had been an enriching experience.

Ms Donnalie Edwards wondered about the impact of the assembly on the churches of Zimbabwe. Although a good many local people were involved, how much opportunity had they been given for genuine participation in the official programme?

The issue of participation of the local churches was a difficult one. Dr Abuom thanked the APC and staff for their efforts to ensure participation by the Zimbabwean churches. She had herself visited local churches and heard something of the problems they were facing which made it difficult for them to participate. In future the Council should look carefully at the churches in a country hosting an assembly, their commitment to the task, their willingness to cooperate with other churches in the country, and the political situation. This was a continuing debate.

Canon Clement Janda, general secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches, affirmed this body's appreciation to the WCC for coming to Africa for its assembly. However, he felt that greater attention should have been given by the Council to the presence of the REOs. Neither AACC nor FOCESSA, as expressions of the ecumenical movement in Africa, had received much visibility in the assembly.

Bishop Rogerson reported that the Church of England's General Synod debate on Harare had been much more positive than the one following Canberra, and no negative votes had been recorded. However, part of the debate dealt with the plenary sessions and the frustration engendered by the reading of documents in plenary and the time taken to deal with the reports. He urged that in future a greater discipline be exercised in order to allow delegates to have more opportunity to express their views.

Ms Idah Njobvu mentioned the need to find other methods of presenting speeches and documents which would be helpful for those not accustomed to this style of working.

A point was raised regarding the way we engage in discussion together as a fellowship of churches. The focus at Harare was always on the centre which meant that no debate between the churches was possible, since there was no opportunity to respond to one another and engage in the issues raised. Perhaps the Central Committee might find a way for discussion which would allow for more spontaneous response between speakers.

Archbishop Anastasios had been disappointed at the low attendance of local people at daily worship during the assembly. Why was this so? And what had

been the effect of the assembly on the secular world? How did they see us? Did they take us seriously? He feared the Council was met with apathy rather than with any feeling of excitement that something important was taking place. Even the words of the theme, *Turn to God, Rejoice in Hope* seemed to be lost, as they were not taken up again after the Theme plenary. He urged that for the next assembly there be a clearer emphasis and selection of priorities from among the many ideas offered.

Mrs Inger Aasa Marklund spoke of the Indigenous People who would have wished to meet during the assembly, yet they had no interpretation facilities and were in many cases unable to communicate otherwise. Funding and resources would be needed for this in the future..

Mr Samuel Kabue mentioned the question of access for people with disabilities, and the question of inclusiveness in terms of taking this issue as part of the ecumenical agenda. More attention should be given to this in the future, to enable proper accessibility and allow for wider participation on the part of people with disabilities. Although several advisers with disabilities had been present, there was only one delegate with a disability, in spite of requests to member churches to include them.

Ms Jeannie Pitman said how much she had appreciated the video presentation at the 50th anniversary celebration in Harare, outlining the history of the Council's first fifty years. This video would serve as a useful tool for making the Council better known, because it had to be admitted that many people were unaware of its existence. Visual images were always more helpful in communicating a story of this kind.

For Bishop Pagura, one of the major riches of the assembly had been the daily celebration of worship which he had found very creative. But he was disappointed at the fact that there had been no eucharistic celebration - denying participants the joy of eucharistic communion shared. This had become a regular celebration in ecumenical bodies in Latin America, giving an experience of solidarity and joy and witness that they would not wish to forego. He hoped that Central Committee would give more thought to this as part of a future assembly.

The documents were referred to Policy Reference Committee I.

SEVEN YEAR PROGRAMME PERSPECTIVES, THREE-YEAR PLANS

Prof. K. M. George, moderator of the Programme Committee, invited Dr Marion Best to introduce the practical side of the Programme Committee's work.

Dr Best identified the purpose and objectives of the staff teams, explaining their aim to determine activities in relation to human and material resources. Planning was being done together, within and across the teams and clusters. Strategic planning involved looking ahead over a three-year period and naming the anticipated results. Many questions had to be considered, such as: what methods might be used? What would be the style of work? Who were the partners - within the house, across teams, across clusters? CWCs, member churches, REOs? How would the work be evaluated after three years? Agencies and churches were asking for detailed plans before they committed themselves to be partners or to provide funds.

An affirmation of the post-assembly agenda was needed from this meeting of Central Committee. Specifically, criteria must be formulated by which priorities could be set. The Council could not possibly do everything it was asked to do. Dr Best urged members of Central Committee to be aware that if they failed to give staff a clear sense of how priorities must be set, they would have failed in their task. The Programme Committee would work on these matters and bring back recommendations to Central Committee for action.

The General Secretary gave some background information on the process so far. As the Programme Guidelines Committee (PGC) at Harare had been unable to complete its task, it asked that a small group continue its work. This group, drawn from the future membership of the Programme Committee, had met in June, together with the moderators of three commissions who had already been appointed; its main task was to develop an annotated agenda and supporting materials for use by the Programme Committee.

Dr Raiser stressed the importance of planning with a clear time-frame: a perspective for the seven year period, divided into two periods of some three years each. The task of monitoring the work would be done by the Executive Committee and its Programme Sub-committee. A master asking document had

been prepared which would go to the Finance Committee, and in due course be shared with funding partners.

In the ensuing discussion, Dr Tsetsis pointed out that an important aspect was missing from the document: that of the diaconal dimension of the Council's mission in the next period. CUV referred to "fellowship and solidarity", while the PGC at Harare underlined that this emphasis be given to diakonia as a visible sign of unity. In the present global context the Council should initiate a renewed commitment of the churches in sharing their resources. He appealed to the Programme Committee to ensure that diakonia continue to be a *sine qua non* component of the Council's work.

Mr Enns spoke of the enthusiasm for the Decade to Overcome Violence that had been evident immediately following Harare, showing that the churches were keen to be involved. He felt it would be important to set up a reference group for the Decade, in order to help churches relate better to the Geneva office.

Dean Gadegaard said that the core group of the Programme Committee had been asked to integrate the programmatic content into an overarching framework, but he felt this had been elaborated rather than integrated. In fact it was so overarching that almost everything could be put into it! This made the task of prioritising even more difficult.

Dr Granberg-Michaelson was happy with the first part of the document for the Programme Committee, but felt the second part did not provide the tools needed for prioritising. He hoped that after seven years his church - and others - would be challenged to move in fellowship towards those churches from which they were separated; to mission in partnership with others in a pluralistic world.

Secondly, he warned against filling up too quickly the Council's capacity to carry out programmes - this would inhibit its ability to respond to ongoing needs and concerns raised by the world and by the member churches. He hoped the Programme Committee would look again at the PGC report and try to identify the issues which were likely to engage the churches over the next seven years and make that a framework for formulating criteria. This would provide the necessary guidance to staff to focus the work envisioned in the next period.

Dr Kirkpatrick affirmed that the Council should be in the service of the churches and the ecumenical movement. But he felt the Programme Committee might look at a different methodology of building a network of the programmes of the churches, coordinating their work and supporting them, showing that there was one ecumenical movement. This would require a different style. The Decade to Overcome Violence might become a test case: rather than the Council starting a major programme, there should be programmes in the churches that would make an impact in this area.

Mr Shanks - along with others - felt that Central Committee members could do their job of prioritising better if they had more material to work with. With regard to criteria for evaluation: how far did this depend on the extent to which those in the churches identified and related to the programmes which emerged from this process?

(The general secretary announced that documents for the Programme Committee would be available for reference; they could not be treated as CC documents as it had not been possible to have them translated).

Dr Lee felt that the concept "Being Church" was too abstract. Every church had explored how to be a church and what this could mean at the coming of the new millennium: a more concrete objective was needed here. He suggested using the term "inclusive" in a more focused way - we should try to be a more inclusive church among the different understandings of Gospel and Culture, methodologies to overcome violence, and so on. The title "Caring for Life" likewise needed a clearer focus, such as "caring for the life of people and the earth".

OKR Krüger noted that there were plenty of possibilities for cooperation, but a new ecumenical hermeneutic was needed - when would work start on this? It would a great challenge to our churches in terms of mission, ecumenism, and world responsibility. But how should this be defined, and did we have an instrument for this? Other instruments should be defined which would be important for the work as a whole.

Bishop Azariah felt it would be in the interests of our churches if the Programme Committee were to take upon itself the task of an active exercise in building up a church-to-church relationship. Those in Asia sometimes seemed caught in a limited relationship with partners, because some of those in the agencies and partner groups had limited experience of the church itself. They therefore felt isolated from the people of God in other countries. Yet as much as the churches in Asia were in need of advocacy, it was important that priority be given to capacity-building in the life of the churches, both in Asia and Africa. This would not only help build up confidence to do their work, but would be instrumental in improving relationships with people of other faiths, who were in the majority in many countries.

Bishop Huber believed that an important role of the Council was to establish a network of the activities of member churches, but this would only be possible if the Council had its own emphasis and challenge to put to the member churches. He was grateful for the Moderator's concrete proposal regarding Church and Ethnicity. He saw this as a starting point for the Decade to Overcome Violence, together with spirituality and reconciliation - our own contributions to the culture of peace.

What might be the Council's specific answer to the process of globalisation? We should not attack it and regard it as evil; we were dependent on it even while criticising it. We must first talk about mission: it was our mandate to proclaim the gospel to all people in the world and to do this in a fellowship that has committed itself to Human Rights and religious liberty. How was our task of mission related to our affirmation of religious liberty? How could we develop a concept of mission which would be reconciled to tolerance of other religions? Some countries and continents which had a long Christian tradition were today in a missionary situation.

Rev. André Karamaga said that although processes of unification were happening, new divisions were also taking place, yet we did not react as if we were scandalised by this fact. Proposals for unity must be encouraged, and we must teach people about them so that this movement can go forward. Talking and coming together and working together were not enough - we need to educate people so that they come together instead of being divided - and for this we need a strategy, as well as theological reflection which emphasises unity and the way forward together.

Mrs Kronshage said that the Decade to Overcome Violence had met with a great

deal of interest following Harare, and she urged the Council to take responsibility and prepare material for the churches, as they had done for the Women's Decade. Otherwise there would be no real exchange. Each church should do contextual work on violence, but in such a way that it dealt with the same questions and provided a comparison of the answers obtained.

Ms Selai Cati raised the issue of violence in relation to HIV/AIDS. People needed to be educated about the AIDS pandemic which was on the increase in the Pacific. Workshops run by the PCC were more helpful in Kiribati than medical remedies.

Metr. Athanasios stressed the importance of information so that people were aware of what the Council was and what it was doing. There were still some Christian churches and groups which were not in favour of the Council fundamentalist groups, some who were disappointed and who had been led along the wrong path. We must find a way of enriching people, making use of the many media available to us.

Dr Rüegger did not find the document helpful for setting priorities - he felt there was no basic content. He was surprised to find so little reference to the tension between Orthodox and non-Orthodox in the document, and he wondered why this subject was being avoided. Surely it was one of the most essential matters to be dealt with over the coming years - something that must be done openly. By keeping silent, he was afraid that conflicts could arise and lead to division in the Council.

Rev. David Gill, speaking on behalf of the NCC partners, underlined the important challenge received from Dr Best with regard to the ways in which the member churches might more effectively enter into ownership of WCC programmes. Although having no official voice on the Central Committee, the NCCs were committed to doing everything possible to facilitate a positive response to that challenge; he urged that previous discussions with NCCs not be forgotten (see CC minutes 1995, Appendix VII). Given the fact that NCCs were partners and wanted to work more effectively together, how could this be achieved? They were very open to addressing that question with their member churches.

Mr Shepherd Chimuzim, a Youth Adviser from Zimbabwe, appealed for youth to be involved in the campaign on the Decade to Overcome Violence; they had not really been involved in the Women's Decade. He urged that ways be found to publicise the Decade, making use of theatre/drama and other means in order to capture the interest of young people.

Dr Walker-Smith referred to a proposal made earlier that a reference group be established to monitor the work of the Decade to Overcome Violence. She urged that there be clear lines of accountability with the areas for continued elaboration and critical reflection in all Central Committee meetings - a continuing deliberative process, to help churches which did not have a member on Central Committee and partners that were not members of the Council.

Archbishop Anastasios called for a simpler use of language and programmes to help the churches understand more clearly what the Council wanted to achieve. He also appealed for more clarity, simplicity and continuity. It seemed that after every assembly there was a new structure with new terminology and he found it difficult to understand why the Council kept changing: sometimes it was necessary to keep something constant, as long as people in the churches were trying to grasp what this ecumenical movement was about. He wondered whether the new structure was right for the Council: unity, mission, education, had become issues and themes. Why? Unity, mission, and education were the purposes for the Council's existence - not themes or issues. The assembly theme had been discussed at one session of the assembly and was not mentioned again. But for him this remained a programme in itself. While the issues of violence amd globalisation were important, the context must remain the theme of the assembly: Turn to God, Rejoice in Hope.

Ms Karagdag was disappointed that in the proposed framework there was little to suggest that the Council was holding on to its traditional strong commitment to social justice, transformation of social structures and solidarity with the poor and oppressed. She felt that the overarching focus should be the biblical imperative: the suffering victims of injustice and structural violence.

Regarding the Decade to Overcome Violence and the Asian understanding of peace: the Japanese character representing peace was the one representing "enough rice to feed the people". She urged Central Committee to look again and

again at the sources of violence, the unjust social structures that breed violence, to emphasise that peace was not cheap, that it came only after repentance and forgiveness. This should remain central to our quest for peace.

On the issue of globalisation, she felt that, until the Council came up with a clear stand on its commitment to social justice, it would not be possible to organise priorities under this heading.

Bishop Pagura stressed the importance for those in Latin America and the Caribbean of finding an ecumenical answer to globalisation. As *koinonia* we must keep reaffirming our commitment to the ecumenical movement, and continue to work in solidarity and in partnership with ecumenism. The Council was one of the international institutions with the charisma to face the power represented by the IMF, the World Bank, etc..

Dr Park Jong-Wha spoke of the urgency of the work to counter violence in the framework of the Decade to Overcome Violence; he stressed the need for the churches to come together, including those which were not members of the Council. In some cases churches were co-participants in this violence or victims of it. Care must be taken to see that this Decade not be misunderstood as belonging only to WCC but as having shared ownership by all churches within and outside the Council - a shared responsibility and opportunity for common witness.

Bishop Zacharias took up the question of what should be included on the Council's agenda in the next seven years. He saw a gap with regard to the relationship with those of other religions. The world was becoming more pluralistic, with a resurgence of religions, but it was also becoming less spiritual. People must be brought together to talk to one another and learn to understand each other. We should move together not only as churches but with people of other faiths also. The Council had a responsibility to promote non-violence as well as relationships with other religions. The Decade to Overcome Violence must be linked with these relationships, and priority be given to dialogue with other religions.

Ms Fuentes de Capo referred to the fact that, on the day this debate was taking place, elections were taking place in East Timor. She asked that a message of solidarity with the people there be sent in the name of Central Committee. This request was referred to the Public Issues Committee.

Ms Lei Garcia, a Youth Adviser from the Philippines, urged that, in formulating programmes, the Programme and Central Committees stress the inclusive character of the Council. She was grateful for what had been said about moving and building together - but "together" must be seen to include youth and women and the differently-abled as programmes were implemented.

Rev. Septemmy Lakawa, asking what it meant to be church in the contemporary world, noted that "being inclusive" seemed to be the main response. But another challenge from people in Asia was that "being pluralistic" - as a theological, ethical, moral issue - seemed to be more faithful to Christian values.

One of the emphases of the Decade to Overcome Violence must be on different understandings and forms of violence. For example, people with disabilities and Indigenous People had challenged us to look at our different understandings of overcoming violence. On the land rights issue, many Indigenous communities had struggled to claim their right to their own land, as this related to their identity as human beings. The economic crisis was also affecting the lives of people who were economically vulnerable. Because of such crises in the last ten years, there would be more children and young people with disabilities, more affected by HIV/AIDS, addicted to drugs, etc. - all of which would require an ecumenical response. She also pointed to the need to be aware of the rise of religious fundamentalism, as seen in Indonesia where in the past 30 years hundreds of churches had been burnt down.

She appealed to the Programme Committee to leave space for organisations to develop networks for overcoming violence; to develop intercontextual learning on the study of peace, peace-making, peace-building and peace-keeping; to give space for regional churches and organisations, working together with other faiths organisations, to set up networks in developing, monitoring and evaluating the overcoming of violence; finding new ways to achieve change and to keep peace; to create space for an educational process on living ecumenically in a pluralistic world.

Bishop Etchegoyen noted that the reports on Programme and on Finance were directly related to the financial possibilities of the work of the Council. One of the major problems facing us today - and which would get worse - was that of ever-increasing unemployment. This affected people as well as the life of the

churches, the majority of which were in countries with a high level of foreign debt. The issue of work should be an important one for the Council in the next few years, and efforts would have to be made towards solving this problem and doing something about it. Was there any way of linking up with the ILO? Together we could do more, learning from them in the international context and in our mission as churches.

Closing the debate, the General Secretary expressed appreciation for the comments made, which would be taken up in the discussion and work of the Programme Committee.

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MODERATOR

The Moderator of the Finance Committee, Bishop Wolfgang Huber, gave a brief overview of the financial situation of the Council, noting the efforts made at Harare to link financial matters to the CUV process. The assembly had proposed two concrete measures:

- an ecumenical commitment Sunday, which would give opportunity to bring knowledge about the existence and mandate of the Council to every congregation, and
- to look at the question of membership contributions and what it would mean for every member church to give an annual minimum fee of CHF 1,000.

Bishop Huber went on to note that the Eighth Assembly accounts were balanced, in spite of some unexpected costs both beforehand and during the assembly. A small balance was left as a basis for the Ninth Assembly reserve.

The financial results for 1998 had been positive, with a surplus on operating expenses. This allowed for contributions to be made to the building renovation and IT funds. The situation for 1999 was less positive, with a decrease of contributions to the operating budget; a deficit of some CHF 300,000 was anticipated.

With regard to the budget for the year 2000, Central Committee would be asked to make a policy decision. Income continued to decrease, but it was proposed that

the deficit not exceed CHF 50,000. Initiatives would be sought which would either improve the income or address the problem of expenditure.

A master asking document had been prepared, setting out not only the direct costs of every project or activity but also the infrastructure process related to it. Central Committee members as well as member churches should be aware of the process of income development and monitoring.

Considerable discussion, mainly on the question of membership contributions, ensued, noting the following points:

- -- some churches were strong yet did not contribute anything in terms of a membership fee, while other small churches did contribute even if not as much as the minimum amount;
- -- in view of the CUV understanding that if we are to grow together in fellowship there must be mutual accountability and transparency, how was it decided which churches should be invited to contribute more than the minimum amount?
- -- in all our discussions, especially in relation to programmes, we have to be conscious of finance; how can we be fair in financing some programmes and not others?
- -- aware of the difficulty of setting priorities, we must lay down limits as to what can be undertaken and what cannot; it would be better to have a few programmes that are effective than to start many and not be able to finance them adequately; -- as not all churches could be represented on Central Committee and thus were not able to hear such a debate as this, would it be helpful to send reminders about their payments to the churches through the respective NCC? Or even direct to the
- -- we know that churches face difficulties but we know that funding agencies which relate to those member churches are doing well financially; surely it is an obligation of the member churches to exercise some influence on those who have ecumenical money to finance the programmes of the Council and enable it to fulfil its mission as designated by the assembly?

member churches?

-- some churches may not give directly to the Council, but may nevertheless be giving to ACT and other agencies, especially in crisis situations.

Some interest was expressed in exploring the possibility of having an ecumenical Sunday as a day when local congregations were invited to learn something about

the Council and to contribute to its work at parish level. This would help make the ecumenical movement truly a movement of the people of God.

Emphasis was laid on the importance of communication: where people were aware of the Council's activities, mainly in Europe, churches tended to support the council; but further afield - in Africa for example - there was little awareness of the Council's existence, far less of its work, and therefore no interest in contributing financially.

Bishop Huber noted that some of the questions raised in discussion would be shared with the Finance Committee and would be responded to at a later session. He invited Mr Robert Christeler, director of the Finance Cluster, to respond to other points made.

Mr Christeler spoke first about those churches which did not contribute, noting that each situation had to be dealt with in a different way. While it was true that a majority of churches did not contribute, the share of contributing churches had increased slightly as a result of improved communications, discussions, or negotiations on a case by case basis with those churches which were perceived to have the willingness and capacity to contribute even symbolically to the Council's budget. In cooperation with Church and Ecumenical Relations, the Finance staff took into account the financial situation of member churches which were perceived to have difficulty in meeting the CHF 1,000. There were many special situations and staff did not use only one means of applying the minimum standard.

Efforts were made to try to keep member churches aware of their obligations with regard to membership contributions. In spite of having limited staff, the Income Monitoring and Development office (IMD) and those who maintained this relationship with member churches did their best to keep informing these churches. But in some instances the system had its limits.

With regard to the 1998 budget: this was balanced, implying zero operating surplus/deficit. 1998 showed an operating surplus, due to a positive financial year in terms of investment revenue. When the situation had become of concern, a process of tightly controlling expenses had been set up, and, thanks to staff, expenditure had been below budget.

Bishop Huber responded to a question about the imbalance of contributions: those churches in a position to allow them to pay more than the minimum fee should continue to do so. But that should not hinder others from doing what they could. There must be an understanding of those situations, with negotiations taking place, not just a self-definition by a church which could not meet the minimum fee. We need to strengthen the membership fees, accepting that some churches pay more - they do not pay only their membership contributions but additional operating contributions on a basis of negotiations.

PUBLIC ISSUES

The report of the Public Issues Committee (PIC) was presented by its moderator, Canon Trond Bakkevig.

The PIC expressed its appreciation to the members of Central Committee who had made proposals for actions on public issues and who had provided comments on the Draft Memorandum and Recommendations on Response to Armed Conflict and International Law. The Committee had taken all of these into account in its work.

In the Committee's discussion, note was taken, with appreciation, of the recent statement issued by the Angolan Council of Churches with respect to the conflict in that country. The Committee wished to commend them for their action, which provides an eloquent witness for peace and justice.

Similarly, the Committee heard and shared with the Central Committee an expression of the appreciation of the churches in the Democratic Republic of Congo for the recent visit of the General Secretary of the WCC, in which the leadership of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and of the Fellowship of Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA) participated. That visit had both challenged and encouraged the churches to participate actively in the national debate, and in efforts to achieve an end to the continuing war. It had reinforced the ties between these churches and the wider ecumenical movement.

The Public Issues Committee recommended the adoption of the following

"minutes", to be included in the record of this Central Committee and shared as appropriate with churches and others. The Central Committee adopted these minutes as follows:

I. Minute on Nigeria

Bishop Michael K. Stephen of the Methodist Church of Nigeria informed Central Committee about the actions taken by the churches in Nigeria in response to the Memorandum and Recommendations on Nigeria adopted by the Central Committee in 1997. Among those recommendations was an appeal to the churches to keep the human rights situation in that country under close review and to inform the WCC of their actions, and to encourage the churches of Nigeria in their witness for human rights, justice and peace in Nigeria. The political situation in Nigeria had changed significantly since then, and the leadership of the Christian Association of Nigeria had taken a strong stand for justice, identifying itself with the suffering people of the country.

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Geneva, 26 August - 3 September 1999,

- -- welcomed this report from the churches of Nigeria;
- -- commended them for their witness and their response to its earlier request; and
- -- requested the Officers to write to the Christian Association of Nigeria, conveying the gratitude of the Central Committee for the churches' efforts, encouraging them to continue to be a prophetic voice in the nation, and offering them support as they pursue reconciliation in Nigeria.

II. Minute on Jerusalem

The Central Committee of the WCC, meeting in Geneva, 26 August - 3 September 1999, has received with gratitude the letter signed and sealed by the Patriarchs and Heads of the Christian Communities in Jerusalem, addressed to the General Secretary on 12 August 1999. This letter expresses the appreciation of the Church of Jerusalem for the WCC Statement on the Status of Jerusalem, adopted at the Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1998, recognizing that it will help strengthen the Christian witness in the Holy Land and promote the achievement of an agreement on the status of Jerusalem which affirms the principle that it should be shared and include two peoples and three religions. (See below the text of the letter received.*)

The Central Committee requested the General Secretary to respond to the Patriarchs and Heads of Christian Communities, reaffirming the WCC's conviction that Jerusalem is central to the faith of Christians and Christians' responsibility to pray and work "for the peace of Jerusalem."

*Letter from Jerusalem

Revd Dr Konrad Raiser General Secretary World Council of Churches GENEVA

Jerusalem, 12 August 1999

Dear Dr. Raiser,

First and foremost, We would like to express our appreciation to the World Council of Churches for its Statement on the Status of Jerusalem that was adopted during its VIII General Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1998.

Based on the spirit of our Memorandum on the Significance of Jerusalem for Christians, dated 14 November 1994, this statement will help strengthen the Christian witness in this land as much as promote the status of this holy city as being one that includes its two peoples and three religions.

We strongly encourage the World Council of Churches - through its Central Committee and its other clusters and departments - to ensure that the pivotal issue of Jerusalem stays on its agenda. We also trust that the on-going cooperation between the Churches of Jerusalem and the WCC be maintained so that the voice of the Church of Jerusalem could be heard by all church constituencies world-wide.

As the Holy Land prepares itself to usher in a fresh millennium, We all pray and hope that Jerusalem will truly become faithful to its calling as a City of Peace.

Yours in Christ,

Signatures and seals of Their Beatitudes the Patriarchs and Heads of the Christian Communities in Jerusalem is appended hereunder in conjunction with the letter addressed to Revd Dr Konrad Raiser, WCC General Secretary, dated 12 August 1999:

+Diodoros I
Greek Orthodox Patriarch

+Michel Sabbah Latin Patriarch +Torkom Manoogian Armenian Patriarch

+Anba Abraham Coptic Orthodox Archbishop

+Abba Gabriel Ethiopian Orthodox Archbishop

+Lufti Lahham Greek Catholic Patriarchal Vicar

+Boulos Sayyah Maronite Patriarchal Vicar

(Absent due to illness) +Andre Bedoghlyian Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Vicar Giovanni Batistelli Custos of the Holy Land

+Mar Swerios Malki Murad Syrian Orthodox Archbishop

+Riah Abu Al-Assal Anglican Bishop

+Mounib Younan Lutheran Bishop

+Boutros Abdel Ahhad Syrian Catholic Patriarchal Vicar

III. Minute on Indonesia

The WCC, in pursuance of the minute adopted by the Eighth Assembly at Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1998, and in cooperation with the Christian Conference of Asia, sent an ecumenical delegation to Indonesia in late January 1999. This was followed up with a staff visit to East Timor in late June and early July 1999 related to the planned United Nations supervised referendum.

Since the fall of Suharto in May 1998, the Council has monitored developments in the country and has kept close contact with the churches, particularly those in East Timor and Irian Jaya. The WCC sent a message to the government of Indonesia expressing concern about the growing incidence of communal violence and attacks on places of worship in Ambon and other parts of Indonesia, and about continuing human rights violations by the security forces, particularly in East Timor and Aceh, where women and children have suffered most. The WCC and many of its member churches and partner agencies have provided support to the Indonesian churches' efforts to assist the people and provide witness in these difficult circumstances.

The Central Committee of the WCC, meeting in Geneva, 26 August - 3 September 1999, expressed particular concern now about the dangers con-

fronting East Timor in the post-referendum period, as a consequence of the division of the community between the pro-autonomy factions, some of whom have been armed by the Indonesian military, and pro-independence sectors. In light of the present climate of hostility and conflict, the Central Committee requested the General Secretary to address an appeal to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, urging him to consider an alteration and a further extension of the mandate of the UN presence in East Timor beyond the referendum period until peace and security there is restored.

The continuing communal violence in Ambon and the increase in repressive measures by the security forces in Aceh and Irian Jaya remained a matter of grave concern for the WCC. The Central Committee assured the churches in Indonesia of the WCC's ongoing support for them as they struggle through this difficult period.

The Central Committee called upon WCC member churches to:

- -- pray for the churches and people of Indonesia;
- -- continue to monitor developments and exchange information; and
- -- offer support and encouragement to the churches of Indonesia as they work for peace and reconciliation, for human rights and for justice for all.

IV. Minute on Peace and Reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea

The World Council of Churches and many of its member churches and related agencies around the world have been deeply concerned about the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which has been raging with ever greater intensity since May 1998. We have grieved at the terrible, mounting toll of human life this war is again inflicting on peoples who have suffered so terribly and for so long from war, repression and abject poverty. Immediately after the outbreak of hostilities, the General Secretary wrote to the leaders of the two countries, imploring them to stop the fighting and to resolve the border issue, which was the immediate source of contention, by peaceful means.

Earlier this year an ecumenical delegation led by the WCC, including a representative of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Fellowship of Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa

(FECCLAHA), visited both Ethiopia and Eritrea, to express the concerns of the churches around the world and to offer whatever assistance the WCC and the wider ecumenical movement may be able to render. The delegations met with government leaders, and especially with Orthodox, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Muslim leaders, who on both sides have formed religious committees to promote a peaceful solution.

These two religious committees would be meeting for a third time soon at the invitation of Norwegian Church Aid. Fervently hoping that the conversations they resume now may lead to agreement on joint steps to be taken for peace, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Geneva, 26 August - 3 September 1999, conveyed to the religious leaders on both sides our encouragement and the assurance of our prayers. We know from our own experience how difficult is the road to peace, but we know that God Almighty expects all those who believe in Him to travel that road. We know how demanding is the way to justice, but God is a God of Justice. We know how long is the way to reconciliation, but God wills that we live together as sisters and brothers who love and care for one another. Be assured that we stand ready to accompany and support you when you are ready and able to travel together for the sake of God and all God's people. May God inspire your deliberations, unite your spirits, and equip you to bring a word of hope, a word of peace to the leaders of your countries and to all those who look to you for spiritual guidance.

Rev. Melaki Zerihun (Ethiopian Orthodox Church) expressed particular appreciation to the World Council for the help it had given to the local churches in the service of peace, justice and freedom. The churches of Ethiopia and Eritrea must establish peace among themselves and then become the leading force behind the search for permanent peace and reconciliation between the people of the two countries.

V. Memorandum and Recommendations on Response to Armed Conflict and International Law

The Public Issues Committee recommended that the Central Committee receive and commend to the churches the following Memorandum, and that it adopt the recommendations proposed. After considerable discussion, resulting in some amendments, the Central Committee **agreed** to the text as follows:

- 1. The nine months since the WCC Harare Assembly have yet again been marked by costly international and internal armed conflicts in virtually all of the regions of the world, and by growing threats to international peace and security. Very many of them have had disastrous consequences for the human rights of affected populations, have resulted in massive loss of life and displacement of populations, and have damaged respect for democracy and the international rule of law. In response to some, major world or regional powers have intervened in the name of international security and humanitarian concern, sometimes with tragic unforeseen consequences. This was especially the case in the response to the Kosovo crisis. Many other conflicts, however, have been substantially ignored by the international media and received little effective attention by the international community.
- 2. The nature of the international response, the rationale offered for intervention, and the failure to respond in certain notable crises raise serious questions which require the attention of the churches. They are of particular concern for the ecumenical movement and for the World Council of Churches, which was formed in response to appeals like that made in 1920 by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which urged the churches to join together to give a witness to the nations with respect to the need for a just, peaceful world order and effective international institutions to promote and sustain it. Thus, from the earliest beginnings the ecumenical movement's commitments to church unity, human rights, peace and justice, and the international rule of law have been bound together. In these interests, and out of a desire to remain faithful to the Gospel and to make Christian witness and mission credible to the world, the WCC has repeatedly sought to offer constructive critique and guidance to the nations.
- 3. Moreover, as the General Secretary has noted in his report to this meeting of the Central Committee, held in Geneva 26 August 3 September 1999, the Vancouver Assembly's 1983 Statement on Peace with Justice, which said that "without justice for all everywhere we shall never have peace anywhere," must be reconsidered in the light of the experience of the last decade. This affirmation is certainly true with respect to the lasting, comprehensive peace Christians receive from God. The Church can be satisfied with nothing less. Yet the conflicts of the past decade have shown that action for peace in the more limited sense of controlling armed conflict becomes an unavoidable priority in the face of today's massive threats to justice and life itself. The churches and the

international system need to consider more deeply in the present context how the complementary and interrelated needs of people for both peace and justice can be more effectively related.

- 4. Once again, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches feels compelled to address churches and nations in the light of the international response in recent months to armed conflicts in the Balkans, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East which have highlighted trends addressed by the WCC particularly since the Canberra Assembly in 1991:
 - 4.1. the erosion of the authority and capacity of the United Nations and its institutions created to develop, codify and guarantee respect for the international rule of law;
 - 4.2. the unwillingness, especially of influential states, especially in the West, to revise appropriately their policies and actions on international peace and security in the light of the new needs and opportunities created by the end of the Cold War;
 - 4.3. the tension between principles in the United Nations Charter of non-intervention in the affairs of sovereign states, and the obligation of the international community to intervene on humanitarian grounds when states fail to respect the human rights of people within their borders;
 - 4.4. the complex interrelationship between the need for justice as the essential basis of peace, and the need for peace as essential to the pursuit of justice; and
 - 4.5. the ever more pressing challenges confronting churches in particular national or international conflicts, and the ecumenical movement as a whole, in efforts to promote non-violent approaches to conflict transformation and resolution, and post-conflict healing and reconciliation.

The erosion of the authority of the United Nations

5. As the World Council of Churches has stated on many occasions, the United Nations plays a unique role in the world as the sole body where universally accepted standards of human rights are developed. Churches and other advocates of human rights depend on the impartiality and universality of the United Nations in seeking to hold governments of many different political persuasions accountable to international standards. Thus, a stronger and more effective United Nations is crucial to assure respect for the international rule of law, a

measured collective approach to the maintenance of international peace and security, the enforcement of international human rights standards, and the promotion of justice in the world.

- 6. The dominant conflict in the period since the Harare Assembly has been the crisis in Kosovo. The decision of NATO powers to intervene there on humanitarian and national security grounds without effective reference to the UN Charter and the Security Council gave rise to heated international debate. The international response to Kosovo is a compelling example of the erosion of the authority of the United Nations and is thus worth examining in some detail. The decision to intervene militarily in Kosovo was defended in different ways by the NATO governments. Overriding considerations of national security were cited yet again by the United States and some other NATO powers to justify intervention in their own national security interests. The intervention was also justified on human rights and humanitarian grounds, with governments maintaining that the urgency of the humanitarian crisis demanded a more rapid response than the Security Council was capable of authorizing. Some governments cited previous decisions of the Security Council as having justified NATO acting on its own within the provisions of the Charter, noting that UN involvement in the Kosovo crisis stopped short - for political reasons - of authorizing force, but that it was moving in that direction.
- 7. In retrospect, many have felt that political and geopolitical interests of major powers prevailed over the intention of the Charter that all member states have equal rights under and obligations to international law. NATO decisions and actions with respect to Kosovo sidelined and undercut the authority of the United Nations, its Security Council and its specialized agencies, which have been constituted with the mandate to guide and conduct humanitarian operations, and led to violations of fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, especially with respect to the treatment of refugees. They effectively barred the Secretary-General from exercising his impartial mediating role, and blocked him from pursuing negotiations for a non-violent resolution. He and the UN as a whole were virtually excluded from the NATO-led Rambouillet negotiations held under the imminent threat of military intervention. Moreover, questions have been raised about the precedents set in Kosovo for the further development of a new NATO strategy and role in the world.

8. In the process, NATO powers subjected themselves to the charge of having applied a double-standard in assessing and responding to humanitarian needs. Few denied the legitimacy of the urgent humanitarian need created by increasing acts of ethnic cleansing against the ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo, but many raised serious questions about the failure of the same nations to respond with similar energy and decisiveness to crises in Africa and elsewhere, whose humanitarian dimensions were equally serious and often more dramatic in terms of the threats they posed to the life, peace and security of masses of people. It is hard to avoid the impression that racist attitudes have influenced such decisions.

The need for new approaches to international peace and security

- 9. The collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, and the brief period of global entente which occurred after 1991, created new opportunities within the framework of the United Nations for powers from East and West to join together to help resolve a series of long-standing conflicts in parts of the world where they had previously confronted one another in proxy wars. Many held out the hope that this new-found cooperation would lead to rapid reductions of nuclear and conventional arsenals built up during decades of military stand-off between the two great military alliances. They expected this would lead to a thorough-going review of approaches to international security based on military alliances, building on the experience of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Ecumenical bodies and others in North America and Europe, whose nations were parties to the CSCE Final Act, sought to help shape the new Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The hope was to strengthen international security within this regional sphere through adopting a more comprehensive approach to addressing the underlying causes of conflict and to create new, non-military regional and sub-regional alliances for peace based on respect for human rights.
- 10. The churches have supported the development of such regional civilian alliances as constructive alternatives to a "Cold War" ideology which divided reality into opposing enemy camps associated with good and evil, right and wrong, and which proved incapable of addressing the more complex historical, cultural, political and economic realities revealed by the conflicts which broke out in the immediate post-Cold War period.
- 11. The decision of the UN Security Council to invite the OSCE to deploy a

large, unarmed civilian observation contingent in Kosovo was therefore welcomed in many quarters as a constructive, non-military approach to the protection of threatened civilian populations and to addressing the causes of the conflict through inter-ethnic dialogue. Alone, the OSCE may not have been able to achieve the desired goals, but combined with UN-led negotiations it might have had a chance to succeed. Opinions differ. Some hold that this form of intervention came too late to reverse the course of events, and that the only remaining option was strong, decisive military action. Others believe that the persistent threats and apparent determination of NATO powers to pursue armed intervention cut short this innovative alternative approach.

12. Developments in Kosovo have underscored the fact that the OSCE, like other regional bodies, is far from realizing its potential as an alternative approach to international security within Europe. While much work remains to be done to make the OSCE a credible alternative to military alliances, the churches should continue to support the vision of civilian-based regional alliances seeking peace based on respect for human rights.

Principles related to "humanitarian intervention"

- 13. The tension between the principle of national sovereignty, on which the present international system is based, and the moral obligation members of the international community may feel to intervene in urgent situations of humanitarian emergency, was intensified in the early 1990s around such African crises as Somalia, Rwanda and Sudan. This tension has been exacerbated by the changing nature of warfare.
- 14. Today's conflicts are characterized by an increasing number of civilian casualties and are fuelled by an arms trade of unprecedented proportions. In fact, far from being the unintended victims of warfare, civilian populations have increasingly become the targets of military action. As UN Under-Secretary-General Olara Otunnu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflicts, has reminded this Central Committee, in conflicts in which enemies are demonized, villages and entire populations have become the targets of military action in which children and women suffer disproportionately. Millions of children have been killed, maimed, uprooted, sexually abused and traumatized by today's wars. The UN Security Council Resolution 1261 (1999) of 25 August demonstrated that the international community is becoming aware

of the tremendous impact of war on children and concrete suggestions have been made on ways to reduce the damage inflicted on them. But these measures need the support of churches, non-governmental organizations, governments and inter-governmental organizations. Concrete initiatives are needed to address the needs of children and women particularly in conflict situations; the issue of the protection of children must be placed on the agenda during peace negotiations; and the needs of children in post-conflict situations must be addressed. Children represent the future of their countries and our world. The international community needs to demonstrate flexibility and creativity to ensure that their needs are met and, most of all, that the conflicts which wreak havoc with their lives are prevented or resolved quickly.

- 15. The tension between the perceived need for the international community to take action to stem a tide of civilian deaths and the principle of non-intervention was brought into sharp focus by the discussions around "humanitarian intervention" in Kosovo.
- 16. We note that there is as yet no consensus among the churches about either the meaning of the term "humanitarian intervention" or about its justification in certain cases. For some, "humanitarian intervention" refers to a range of actions, short of the use of armed military force, which the international community can take to respond to situations where there are massive violations of human rights. For others, "humanitarian intervention" involves the use of force. For some churches, the use of military force can never be justified while others believe that in certain situations, when other non-military means have been exhausted, military action may be justifiable.
- 17. In recent years, Chapter VII of the UN Charter (Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression) has often been cited as a justification for intervention in Iraq by the Gulf War coalition forces, in Somalia by the United States and some of its allies, and now again in Kosovo by NATO. It is necessary to recall that the clear preference of the Charter, in general, is for "pacific resolution of disputes," and in Chapter VII, in particular, the preference is for "measures not involving the use of armed force." Only when the Security Council considers such actions to be inadequate, or when these actions have proved to be inadequate, may other measures be taken "to maintain or restore international peace and security" by military or other forms

- of coercion (Art. 42). In such a case, a special agreement is required with the Security Council, including specification of "the numbers and types of forces, ...and the nature of the facilities and assistance to be provided" (Art 43).
- 18. The NATO intervention took another direction. Not only did it ignore these provisions of the Charter, it used levels of force equivalent to those used in war. Since no declaration of war was issued, it could be argued that NATO powers also placed themselves outside the framework of international humanitarian law applicable in war. The UN Charter remains essentially silent with respect to intervention on humanitarian grounds, though the debate on this issue has included arguments that massive violations of the rights of citizens within a sovereign state constitute a threat to international peace and security, and thus fall within the terms of Chapter VII. Even in this case, no single power, nor a group of powers is authorized to take action outside specific decisions of and regular consultation with the Security Council Laws are established both in the national and international sphere not primarily to authorize the use of force, but to limit it.
- 19. The moral obligation of the international community to protect groups and individuals when their rights are massively violated by the state, or when the state refuses or fails to protect them, still remains. It may well be that new standards of international conduct need to be established in this respect. In this debate, the churches need to be involved, seeking answers to such questions as: Have all other avenues of non-violent action been exhausted before military intervention is considered? Who determines that the violation of human rights has reached a level to warrant armed intervention? How can people be protected from mass violations of human rights? How are sovereign nations to be protected against politically- motivated intervention? What measures are necessary to prevent individual powers or groups of nations from "taking the law into their own hands" and engaging in actions guided less by international law than by their own particular interpretations of peace, democracy and human rights? If the legitimate international authority were to take a decision to intervene on humanitarian grounds as a last resort, what limits need to be placed on the use of armed force? Who sets the long-range goals and strategies to ensure that an effective long-term solution is achieved through intervention? How is the expertise of competent UN humanitarian agencies to be drawn upon in the setting and implementation of such goals? How can the roles of military and civilian

components of such intervention forces be distinguished in a way which increases confidence in their impartiality and effectiveness? As the intervention in Kosovo and Yugoslavia as a whole showed, failure to have clear guidelines on these questions can lead to flagrant violations of basic international standards related to the protection of refugees, and of established international norms with respect to access and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The role of the churches and the ecumenical movement in times of conflict 20. Throughout history those who choose to go to war have sought religious support and justification for their actions. Conflicts during the past decade especially have often been cloaked in religious garb. It is also true that religious groups, including the churches, have for their own reasons increasingly complicated or reinforced national, ethnic and other tensions which underlie and sustain conflict. The Eighth Assembly has renewed the call for churches to build new, more effective interfaith alliances to transform and mediate conflict. This is especially urgent today when so many groups in society who feel marginalized or discriminated against seek to reaffirm their particular identities and have them recognized. Debates within the WCC in recent years have also shown the degree to which conflict, and the perceived role of churches within it, can be divisive of the ecumenical fellowship. The international approach to the conflict in Kosovo has highlighted this tension and revealed new dimensions of the historical, cultural, theological and ecclesiological questions involved. The Council began to address aspects of this more intensively through activities related to the Programme to Overcome Violence. Programmes on ecclesiology and ethics, the role of the churches in situations of ethnic and national tensions, and theological approaches to violence in society continue now within the context of the Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence.

21. Because of their shared commitment to Christ the peace-maker and to the universality of the Gospel, the churches are called to be agents of reconciliation in a troubled world. Reconciliation is not an easy task, particularly after many lives have been lost, people have been maimed or injured and lost their property and livelihood. Nor is reconciliation accomplished overnight; rather the steady, sustained commitment of religious communities is needed to heal the wounds of war and create conditions where peace can be maintained. It is also important that the churches commit themselves at an early stage to prevent the escalation of conflicts. In some places, churches are already working on the local level in

peace-making and peace-building activities in their communities and those examples need to be held up and affirmed. But the ecumenical fellowship needs, in dialogue and cooperation with people of other faiths, to expand and intensify its efforts in the broader dimensions of peace-making for the sake of peace and justice in the world.

As Christians, we take inspiration from the words of the Apostle Paul:

So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation: that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us: we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (II Corinthians 5: 17-20)

Recommendations

In light of these considerations, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Geneva, 26 August - 3 September 1999:

- 1. Reaffirms the long-standing support of the World Council of Churches for the United Nations as the unique instrument of the peoples of the world for guaranteeing respect for the international rule of law; for guiding and governing international actions for international peace and security; for providing leadership in response to humanitarian need in times of conflict; and for developing an approach to peace which holds together early-warning and prevention of armed conflict, peace-making and peace-keeping, and post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building.
- 2. Encourages the United Nations in its continuing efforts to find new and appropriate ways of responding to civil conflicts and other situations in which human rights are violated on a mass scale, including measures to overcome the culture of impunity.
- 3. Reiterates its call on member churches to raise awareness in their societies and impress upon their governments the need and obligation of all states to

respect the obligations they have assumed under the UN Charter, and to support the United Nations and its specialized agencies so that they may more effectively fulfil the roles they have been assigned by the international community.

- 4. Calls on the United Nations, churches and church-related institutions to continue to raise awareness about the impact of war on children and women, to address the needs of children and women in conflict situations, to advocate for the inclusion of children's and women's issues during peace negotiations, to respond to the needs of children and women in post-conflict situations, and to support efforts by all organizations to advocate on behalf of children and women in situations of violence and armed conflict. In this context, the Central Committee welcomes UN Security resolution 1261 (1999) on "Children and Armed Conflict," and urges the Security Council to apply these provisions whenever it considers responses to specific situations.
- 5. Renews its call for effective controls to be placed on research, production, use, sale or transfers of weapons of war, in the light of massive military actions such as that conducted by NATO in Kosovo and other parts of Yugoslavia, which serve the purpose of testing new, ever more sophisticated weapons in attacks on heavily populated areas, and which glorify such weapons.
- 6. Recommends that the General Secretary facilitate a study, in consultation and cooperation with church-related and other humanitarian agencies, and with competent research institutes, to be presented to the Central Committee on the ethics of so-called "humanitarian intervention," taking into account the legitimate right of states to be free of undue interference in their internal affairs and the moral obligation of the international community to respond when states are unwilling or incapable of guaranteeing respect for human rights and peace within their own borders.
- 7. Calls on churches and church-related institutions to reflect on the churches' unique contributions in facilitating reconciliation and encouraging peaceful means of resolving conflicts and to urge their governments to devote increased attention to non-violent means of conflict resolution and to develop and support institutions for training in alternative, non-military approaches to international peace and security consistent with the new demands and opportunities offered in the post Cold War period.

- 8. Calls on churches to give expression to an "ecumenism of the heart," to remain open to one another, and to engage in both bilateral and multilateral dialogue on issues related to their shared obligation to manifest the universality of the gospel at all times, particularly in times of religious, ethnic, national or international conflict, supporting and encouraging one another, and giving witness to their unity in Christ for the sake of the world.
- 9. Calls on churches and church-related institutions to participate actively in the Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010), to recover and uphold traditional means of non-violent conflict resolution, to develop creative approaches to prevention and responses to conflicts within their own contexts, and to share information about their activities with churches and church-related networks.

The Central Committee **received** the report of the Public Issues Committee with appreciation.

AFRICA PLENARY Journey of Hope

Dr Agnes Abuom, moderating the two sessions, welcomed participants, reminding them that the focus in Harare had been on Africa and this was a continuation of that Journey of Hope. A brief video was shown of images of Africa taken in Harare. The idea of focusing on a region during a meeting of Central Committee was an experiment to test the viability of such an approach in terms of bringing out issues from a region, giving participants an opportunity to contribute, and serving as a model for listening to the voices from a region and discerning how to address the issues together.

A note of the key issues touched upon was referred to Policy Reference Committee II.

Testimonies

The session began with three testimonies - from Nigeria by Ms Abigail Ogunsanya (Church of the Lord [Aladura] Worldwide); from Angola by Rev.

José Domingo Caetano (Evangelical Pentecostal Mission of Angola); and on the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission, South Africa**, by Dr Maake Masango (video).

Agnes Abuom (WCC President from Kenya) took up the story - In all parts of Africa there are conflicts, people are in pain, they are suffering, they are crying; blood is being shed but no tears are shed for this blood. Wars and conflict result not only in physical killing, but in emotional dying. Armed conflict has led to destruction and impoverishment; AIDS is ever on the increase. The growing industry is unemployment, drug pushing; the loss of knowing how to use the gifts God has given people; as well as globalisation and its negative effects, and the burden of debt.

Africans must affirm their identity and their dignity, otherwise in the eyes of the world Africa would continue to be seen in terms of slavery and colonisation. Because of diamond and gold production, their identity and dignity are not respected, so borders are often closed to them. The continuing unresolved injustices in Africa that cause the pain are not just passing matters. Africans have their own spirituality and worship processes; Africa is no longer the "dark continent" for her people see the renaissance.

In Harare Africans committed themselves to struggle without resources, but with a spirit of determination, to liberate Africa, to free it, to unite Africa. They are committed to the total liberation of Africa, to the total healing of Africa, to the total reconciliation of Africa. In a simple phrase: we believe in a living God, a God to whom we may turn in rejoicing hope.

Dr Abuom then invited the ecumenical movement through this Central Committee to join in this Journey of Hope. As Africans had found their identity, they invited participants to receive what they were offering - ubuntu, utu - a spirituality that affirmed community ethics, that affirmed human relations, that had something new to offer in the way of forgiveness, of reconciliation. From their traditions as Christians and Africans, they were bringing something to the ecumenical movement.

In the discussion which followed this first part of the plenary, Ms Ashley Seaman spoke of the Decade Festival where many women testified about violence in their

lives. After each testimony those gathered said together: "Your story is my story, your story is our story". This had been a most profound experience of solidarity, with all barriers falling away. She invited participants to repeat these words in thanksgiving for the testimonies shared in this session.

Speakers from various African countries described situations of people struggling to make life possible in the midst of all the problems and difficulties they were facing each day. Mr Karamaga said that the situation in Africa was a challenge to the churches and the ecumenical movement. How could people who were suffering respond to the call of the gospel and its offer of fullness of life? Only by dealing with the root causes of the evil that is causing this suffering.

Ms Njobvu blamed Africa's problems on the debt issue which was affecting people at all levels of their lives - health, education, unemployment. Almost all of Africa is touched by war, with many young people involved in fighting without understanding why. Ways have to be found to help the youth to contribute in a constructive way towards making their countries better places to live in. Peace initiative programmes are needed to help develop a culture of peace.

Mr Kiplagat felt it was time for Africans to take ownership of their problems, rather than blaming others for them. Unless they looked their problems in the face and struggled with them, they would not succeed in overcoming them. He called on fellow Africans to believe in themselves and their capabilities for tackling their difficulties.

Canon Janda gave some examples of grassroots peace-making taking place in Southern Sudan; Bishop Sengulane's programme in Mozambique entitled weapons into ploughshares which he hoped would be replicated in many other war-torn areas of the continent. Women in Accra had decided to be agents of peace; political leaders in the Great Lakes area were being encouraged to start developing peace-making efforts, as well as programmes to deal with AIDS. "We are troubled but we are not destroyed". He called on the community represented by participants in this Central Committee to join Africans on the Journey of Hope.

Speakers from Asia said they had been inspired by the struggles of the African peoples, and assured them of the solidarity of the struggling people of Asia. Ms

Karagdag referred to the challenge of globalisation - a new problem to be faced by peoples everywhere. Dr Lee also spoke of the debt issue as one of the main things to be dealt with in the 21st century, and he stressed the need for greater understanding about the structure of these debts so that campaigning for debt relief can be more effective.

From Latin America, Bishop Etchegoyen felt that any analysis of today's problems must concentrate on the North/South relationship, which is unjust, inhuman and oppressive. The prices of raw materials are unjust, as are exchange laws, and the interest on loans - all benefiting those in the north. What did it mean to have hope in situations of starvation and poverty? It meant to pray that Jesus Christ suffers with those who are suffering; to express solidarity, but also to struggle for structural change in the economic field. To have hope meant to structure the unity we have in order to serve life - a life which must be different. Not an easy challenge but one to which God was calling us.

Dr Tyrone Pitts, from North America, urged that it was important to look at the African diaspora and aim to promote solidarity among Africans throughout the world. Africa could be seen as the seedbed of hope for the ecumenical movement if it were lifted up as a focus in moving towards the 21st century.

Dr Granberg-Michaelson referred to the background paper that had been shared with participants entitled "Africa: Challenges for the Ecumenical Movement" (see Appendix V"). He felt that this contained some important new thinking and regretted that there was no opportunity to give some attention to it during this meeting of Central Committee. Nevertheless he hoped the Council would take up the challenges in this paper in further work towards reconstruction. Canon Bakkevig also felt this paper provided a helpful analysis enabling a greater understanding of the African situation, and urged that a comprehensive strategy be developed to follow up on it.

* * *

At a second session, Dr Olara A. Otunnu, UN Under-Secretary-General and newly-appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, was invited to address the Central Committee on the Subject: "Hope for Africa: Prospects and Constraints", with particular reference

to children and armed conflict. ³

Saying how much at home he felt in the Ecumenical Centre, Dr Otunnu informed participants that he was a nephew of Archbishop Janani Luwum, of Uganda, a former member of Central Committee (1968-1974). He went on to refer to the challenges facing Africa, asking how African countries could achieve a credible measure of national cohesion; and how to tackle the issue of peace and war in Africa, a continent touched disproportionately by conflicts.

Pointing out that 90% of casualties caused by current armed conflicts are civilians - mostly women and children - compared to 45% in the Second World War and 5% in the First World War, Dr Otunnu urged the churches to help halt civilian casualties. He also called on the World Council to put its moral weight behind the recently-passed Resolution 1261 of the UN Security Council aimed at saving children from the scourge of war.

He further urged the WCC to work with the UN and other humanitarian agencies to create "a zone of peace" around children, protecting them from armed conflict, ensuring that they were not used as soldiers, and guaranteeing that humanitarian aid reached them when they were caught up in armed conflict situations. Hospitals and schools should also be banned as targets in armed conflicts.

Dr Ottunu concluded with the following remarks:

"I believe that the most important and pressing challenge today is how to translate the impressive body of international instruments and local norms into commitments and actions that can make a tangible difference to the fate of children exposed to danger on the ground. This means, above all, generating concerted political action at both the international and national levels.

"We must create a political and social climate which makes the brutalisation and abuse of children an absolute 'No'. The world community needs to send forth a clear message that it cannot maintain 'business as usual' with those who

³ The full text of Dr Otunnu's address is available on request: see Appendix VIII.

systematically commit atrocities and abuses against children. We must reclaim our lost taboos; we must reaffirm the moral injunctions which have been eroded from our societies."

In the ensuing discussion, a number of points were made:

Ms Misenga gave some examples of work being done by women in the Congo in spite of the conflict situation surrounding them: they had started a movement against poverty, trying to bring back traditional values into the every-day situation of children. This included educating women to understand their role in taking care of children, helping them realise that military service exposed children to danger. She urged others to follow this example.

Mr Mendez spoke of a WCC visit to Angola where he had seen something of the reality regarding child soldiers. Although a poor country, Cuba had arranged for some 50,000 Africans to study in its educational institutions. He urged other churches to undertake such practical acts of solidarity in order to enable children to study and become active members of their societies.

Bishop Azariah referred to the exploitation of young children in Pakistan in relation to the carpet and sports industries, and of young girls in the textile factories. He agonised about this situation, yet it was clear that the families of these children were victims of economic exploitation and all family members were obliged to work in order to survive. What could be done to put an end to such exploitation and bring dignity back to the people?

Mr Yaba was concerned that government leaders were often part of the cause of people's suffering. How could church leaders help them become part of the solution rather than part of the problem, and to participate in efforts towards peace and reconciliation?

Dr Otunnu expressed appreciation for the comments made and gave some responses as follows:

- The issues of violence and poverty were the most dangerous for Africa; the priority was therefore to overcome these. Over 70% of the cases considered by the Security Council today were from Africa, and those who suffered the worst -

by far - were children and women.

- What can the WCC do? First, advocacy. The Council combined a unique moral influence and authority, and should throw this behind the protection of children and women who were in the most vulnerable situations. And that advocacy should be within the churches, at the same time trusting other international bodies such as the Security Council and the OAU. They cannot ignore the voice of the World Council.
- Secondly, the Council could help by ensuring that the needs of children were a real priority in programmes within the member churches.
- The most effective level of intervention was at the local level because the women and children were there. Dr Otunnu affirmed that his office in the UN was ready to work closely with the churches and the WCC in making a difference.

In her concluding remarks, Dr Abuom affirmed the commitment of African churches to continue the struggle. They were involved in civic education and democratisation; in the area of reconciliation and peace education, seeking to reclaim their dignity and their spirituality. They were inviting sisters and brothers from other churches to join them in this grassroots work, and to join in this Journey of Hope.

The Moderator called on participants to commit themselves as partners - the United Nations and the World Council of Churches - to work for peace with justice.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Bishop Wolfgang Huber, moderator of the Finance Committee, presented the report.

1. 1998 Financial Results

The Committee noted the good financial result for 1998 which was partly due to exceptional investment results and partly due to the fact that the year was untypical, being an assembly year when the usual operational work of the Council reduced as the assembly approached.

Despite this, there had been a drop in income which forced a decrease in operating expense levels in 1998 from CHF 35 million to CHF 30 million; the Council's staff were credited for living within the reduced income. Activities experienced a drop in income from CHF 32 million to CHF 29 million.

At the end of the period there had been an operating surplus of CHF 1.15 million which, following an Executive Committee decision, had been attributed as follows: to the Ninth Assembly fund (CHF 300,000), to the Ecumenical Centre Renovation fund (CHF 600,000) and to an Information Technology Development fund (CHF 250,000).

In terms of the Activities results, the Committee noted that the apparent deficit represented, first, a tendency of funding partners to send their funds directly to partners, and secondly, a planned draw down of activity balances which had grown abnormally high in recent years.

On recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Central Committee expressed thanks to staff for their work, and agreed

that the 1998 Audited Accounts be approved and that the Council be discharged of its duty in relation to them.

2. January to June 1999 Results and 1999 Full Year Forecast

The operating income budget had already reflected a CHF 3 million drop against the actual income in 1998, and the forecast then had to absorb a further CHF 1.7 million reduction, only notified at the beginning of the year. To date, this had been contained to leave the current forecast deficit of CHF 297,000 compared

with the budgeted deficit of CHF 51,000. The Committee noted the tremendous improvement in income monitoring which at least allowed maximum possibility on a donor by donor basis to manage the effect of these reductions at the earliest opportunity.

The Finance Committee, concerned by the high levels of unexpected shortages in contributions which put a strain on staff in carrying out their work, emphasized the need to live within the means available. It respected the efforts of the Finance team in cooperation with the programme staff to react to the shortage of funds available, but underlined and recommended that every effort be made not to exceed the budgeted operating deficit of CHF 51,164.

The Central Committee agreed.

3. Budgets 2000 and 2001

The Committee received the framework budget for the year 2000, and heard of the detailed budgeting that would need to be undertaken by all teams in the WCC following the Central Committee's decisions about programme priorities.

The Committee considered the year 2001 for which no budget had yet been submitted. It noted the impossibility of presenting any credible budget for that year so long before the beginning of the budget year and in advance of certain priority setting decisions, despite the constitutional requirement. It concluded that some budgetary objectives should be established as detailed in the following recommendations.

- 1. In relation to the budget for the year 2000, the Finance Committee recommended:
 - + the approval of the general outline budget for 2000 (see Appendix VII), noting the further work required by staff to produce a detailed budget for monitoring and management purposes in 2000, placing special emphasis on this process, and not producing a deficit exceeding CHF 50,000;
 - + the judicious application of the proposed moratorium of 6 months for staff positions which become vacant in 2000;
 - + the stabilisation of the financial situation of the Council, either by improving income or by making priority decisions;

- + that the Officers, after consultation with the Moderator of the Finance Committee, be asked to approve the budget for the year 2000 at their meeting later in 1999.
- 2. In relation to the budget for the year 2001, the Finance Committee recommended that the following objectives be borne in mind:
 - + a balanced operating budget;
 - + an increase in undesignated and internally generated income as a proportion of operating expenses;
 - + the limitation of core staff costs to 66% of the operating expenses of the Council;
 - + the appropriate inclusion of an activities budget.

The Central Committee agreed to the above recommendations.

4. Compliance with Minimum Membership fee

This item resulted from a resolution of the Eighth Assembly to change the rules and suggested what should happen in the event of a church failing to contribute a minimum membership fee of CHF 1,000.

The concept of a minimum fee was introduced in 1995. In less formal implementation, letters were sent to the relevant churches, and many made a full or partial response. However, it remained a fact that 167 out of 336 member churches did not contribute in 1998.

The Finance Committee made the following observations:

- + not all of the non- or low contributors came from economically depressed areas;
- + the amount of CHF 1,000 had been determined to encourage partnership arrangements between north and south, although, unless including a contribution from the southern partners, this had the effect of removing from them any responsibility to contribute;
- + many churches felt that the WCC was a body that was remote from their situation, and it was suggested that deepening the regional or national relationship might be a way to encourage prayer for and interest in the Council, thus leading to increased income;

+ further, the relationship needed to be nurtured at parish level in order for many churches to become serious contributors.

After discussion, the Finance Committee made the following comments and recommendations which it forwarded to Policy Reference Committee II, which would bring proposals for action to the Central Committee for decision:

- + noting that the membership fee was a topic and challenge for communication with member churches which needed to be intensified with those member churches who felt the Council to be remote, the communication aspect should have priority and staff and Central Committee members alike should take their responsibilities for this;
- + that staff be asked to give priority to this for 2-3 years and that the involvement be broad not just confined to the Income Monitoring and Development (IMD) team;
- + that a time scale of two years be set until the Executive Committee in September 2001, by which time non-compliance would have clear consequences which should be applied consistently, but with reservation in the case of those churches facing severe economic conditions;
- + that the consequences be in some way related to participation in the decision-making processes as well as to eligibility for subsidy;
- + that all discussion about new members be very clear on this financial issue, and that a pledge with regard to compliance be obtained before the membership request be presented to the governing bodies for decision.

5. Ecumenical Commitment Sunday

The Finance Committee noted that preliminary discussion with a variety of partners indicated that for some the proposal for an Ecumenical Commitment Sunday was acceptable, while for others it was unworkable, and for still others, it was already practised.

In discussing the proposed recommendation, the Committee noted that the Office for Income Monitoring and Development should be the first point of contact for churches wanting assistance in implementing the proposal, but that other WCC teams should be involved in facilitating this as well.

The Finance Committee recommended

that, whilst the idea of an Ecumenical Commitment Sunday be commended to the churches, particularly where no comparable approach existed, that the individual member churches be invited to decide whether or not to adopt the proposal, and then to choose an appropriate Sunday in the Church calendar.

HH Aram I proposed that the phrase "whether or not to adopt the proposal" be deleted.

This was seconded and put to the vote. The amendment was lost.

The Moderator pointed out that he had not intended this to be an amendment; he felt that the phrase undermined the consequences of the recommendation. Whatever the Council might recommend to the churches was not binding but was up to them to implement or not.

A further amendment was proposed: "that the idea be commended to the churches".

Bishop Huber explained that when this was decided upon in Harare, the intention had been to have some preparation for it in Central Committee, but some hesitation was communicated by staff implying that it could be counter-productive for those churches which were already involved and did not need an additional proposal with regard to an Ecumenical Commitment Sunday. In Harare it had been suggested that this be the third Sunday in Advent, but it transpired that this time of year was not practical for the majority of churches. He proposed the following re-wording:

The Committee recommends the idea of an Ecumenical Commitment Sunday to the churches; where no comparable approach exists, the churches are invited to choose an appropriate Sunday in the church calendar.

Rev. Norman Shanks proposed that this be amended as follows:

The Committee recommends that the idea of an Ecumenical Commitment Sunday be commended to the churches for adoption, where no comparable approach exists.

The amendment was seconded and put to the vote; it was lost, with some abstentions.

The Central Committee **voted in favour** of the recommendation as amended by Bishop Huber.

6. Assembly Recommendation of a Membership target of CHF 10 million The Committee heard about an objective tool called the "giving index" which was used to determine which churches should be approached to begin or increase their giving. This applied a formula based on the number of members in a church, the gross national product of the country and the existing contribution levels, and produced a more objective ranking of churches - the present leader of which was the Church of Bangladesh. It also produced a mean - the optimum contribution level - and therefore targets for increase for those below the mean.

IMD had taken the results and produced three groupings:

- + high contributing churches which ought to increase giving towards the mean;
- + churches contributing less than CHF 1,000 which should be challenged to contribute CHF 1,000, and
- + non-contributing churches which should contribute the minimum.

Taking a reasonable view of what might be targets for these groups, the Council would reach a membership income figure of CHF 9.5 million.

The Finance Committee recommended

that those member churches which contributed less than the minimum of CHF 1,000 be approached first to broaden their financial support base for the Council; this in turn would provide a strong argument for wealthier churches to increase their participation to the undesignated income base of the Council.

Responding to a question, Bishop Huber explained that there were churches with a relatively low number of members in situations with low GNP but with relatively high participation. That was the starting point for looking at this. Mr Akhura did not like the use of "wealthier churches", while Archbishop Anastasios was concerned about the wealthy churches which did not even give the minimum amount.

Bishop Huber said this would be addressed by Policy Reference Committee I.

The Central Committee agreed to the recommendation as amended:

that those member churches which contribute less than the minimum of CHF 1,000 be approached first by IMD to broaden their financial support base for the Council; this in turn would provide a strong argument for churches with larger financial possibilities to increase their participation to the undesignated income base of the Council.

7. Appointment of Auditors for 1999

The recommendation of the Audit Committee was to reappoint KPMG Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler S.A. as auditors for this period. Under the chairmanship of Mr Jim Pittendrigh, the Audit Committee had secured a reduction in the proposed fee from CHF 170,000 to CHF 130,000.

The Moderator had met Mr Pittendrigh, reviewed this proposal with him and discussed the Management Letter with him with positive results.

The Finance Committee, with thanks to Mr Pittendrigh and the members of the Audit Committee, recommended that KPMG Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler S.A. be re-appointed for 1999, and that the decision regarding the appointment of Auditors for the year 2000 be referred to the Executive Committee for decision nearer the time.

The Central Committee agreed.

8. Ethical Investment Guidelines

The Committee was informed about the process of consultation with the Investment Advisory Group (IAG) and the comments of the Staff Leadership Group on the work being done to revise the Ethical Investment Guidelines. It encouraged further deliberation on a more proactive as opposed to an exclusion-based approach to this issue. It realised that, for that purpose, additional work was needed; it therefore abstained from pursuing concrete action at this time. The Committee asked staff, together with members of the IAG, to further investigate the issue along two lines:

a) maximising the effective application of the WCC Ethical Guidelines within

- the existing portfolio structure by using the new ethical investments screening methodology presently under development by various banks;
- b) using the ethical investment portfolio created by the Ethos Foundation (a Swiss-based ethical foundation which combines ethical screening with constructive dialogue and responsible use of shareholder power) whilst at present not committing any funds to this foundation.

9. Financial Report on the Eighth Assembly in Harare

The Committee received a still preliminary but nearly completed report on the accounts of the Harare Assembly. It realized that unforeseeable costs brought the expenditure from CHF 11 million as expected to CHF 13.1 million. It noted with gratitude that a balanced account had nevertheless been reached and expressed thanks especially to the member churches and the former Central Committee for their efforts to balance the Assembly budget.

The Committee proposed some changes in the budget structure for the next Assembly; contributions to the new Assembly fund should not be taken as "balance from past assemblies". The costs for executive staff participation in the Assembly should be taken as assembly costs properly without being balanced by a transfer from the WCC operating budget. The Committee expressed its respect for the report which it had received and proposed that the final account be approved by the Executive Committee meeting in the year 2000.

10. Assembly Fund for the Ninth Assembly

The Committee could not anticipate any decision on the format and location of the Ninth Assembly. However it proposed to start the process of financial preparation. For that purpose it recommended the following action:

- + the budget of CHF11 million for the Eighth Assembly should be taken as a basis for planning for the Ninth Assembly;
- + the process would have to be prepared to inform member churches which already needed this information because they would be expected to contribute a total of CHF 8 million to the Assembly fund in due course;
- + efforts should be undertaken to bring the Assembly fund which currently comprised CHF 500,000 to a balance of CHF 1.5 million by 1 January 2003 so that it could be used for preparatory expenses for the Ninth Assembly;

+ churches which had not yet fulfilled their commitment for the Eighth Assembly were strongly encouraged to honour this not later than 31 December 1999.

11. Income Monitoring and Development (IMD) staffing

The Committee approved the proposal to reposition the WCC in the USA and to find an IMD staff person to undertake income development and fund-raising in the USA; such a person would in future be responsible for this work in relation to the WCC, including the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey. Further, the Committee was informed that the position of director of IMD would have to be filled in the year 2000.

Noting the consultative process proposed for the USA whereby those who will be approached / addressed by the appointee will be involved in recruitment, the Finance Committee recommended that an Advisory Group of three to four people familiar with the WCC's work, and with expertise in fund-raising, should be instrumental in the preparation of the decision on a new director of IMD in Geneva. Special emphasis should be given to the communication element of IMD.

The Central Committee agreed.

12. Activity Plans

The Committee received information about the new planning and reporting process for the Council's activities as reflected through the Master Asking Document. Acknowledging the improvements in the available instruments which link the planning cycle, the funding cycle and the internal budgeting cycle, the Committee endorsed this process. Implementation of the system integrated the direct activity costs, the cost of staff carrying out these activities, and the general support of infrastructure costs. The new system would improve the transparency of the costs of the various activities undertaken by the Council and would therefore be instrumental in the necessary fund-raising.

The Finance Committee recommended, and the Central Committee agreed

to express thanks to staff for developing this new system, and proposed that it be implemented.

13. The Role of the Finance Committee

Rule VIII of the WCC determines the duties of the Committee as a Standing Committee of the Central Committee. The experience of this first meeting and anticipation of further developments showed that these duties could only be partially fulfilled by a Committee which convened only once every 18 months. There would always be a tension between such a sequence of meetings and the structure of the financial year. Advice was required as to how to deal with this tension. Either the Finance Committee would be obliged to hand over some of its obligations to the Executive Committee or the Officers, or it should meet from time to time outside the meetings of the Central Committee.

The Finance Committee requested advice from either the Central Committee or the Executive Committee.

The Central Committee received the report of the Finance Committee with appreciation.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Mrs Justice Adinyira gave a brief introduction, expressing appreciation to staff for their help in providing background information. Some nominations had been received from member churches and partner organisations; 92 written amendments had been received from members of Central Committee. The Nominations Committee had tried to follow the guidelines in the Rules, and had done its best to achieve the necessary balances. It was a matter for regret that representation of youth was far from adequate.

The report was presented by Dr Clifton Kirkpatrick, who noted that the aim of the Nominations Committee had been to bring a list of people competent for the respective task.

Responding to a question about Orthodox participation, Dr Raiser affirmed that 25% of the total names nominated so far were Orthodox, excluding those - Orthodox and non-Orthodox - to be appointed to the Special Commission.

I. Appointment of Commissions and Advisory Groups⁴

It was pointed out that Commissions were subject to historical traditions, while advisory groups were more flexible and informal. Both Commissions and advisory groups were appointed in order to enable staff teams to consult about their work and to share issues with representatives of member churches.

1. Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME)

It was noted that additional nominations were still awaited; when received they would go to the Executive Committee for approval at a later date.

The list of names proposed so far was agreed.

2. Commission on International Relations

The list of names proposed was agreed

3. Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation

Dr Kirkpatrick pointed out that this was a new commission formed to help the churches build a new generation of persons trained in ecumenism. The remaining vacancies would be filled by the Executive Committee at its next meeting.

Noting that the vacant place for a member from the Pacific region was designated to be filled by a female youth, Bishop Bryce said that the region was handicapped in that there were few women - especially young women - working in the ecumenical field. If the Council insisted on certain criteria, the Pacific was ruled out because it had so few resource persons. He asked whether one of the other regions might supply the youth, giving the Pacific opportunity to be represented otherwise. A name had been brought forward but the Nominations Committee insisted on a young person.

Dr Kirkpatrick affirmed that the Pacific region had been helpful in offering names, but he felt that the Central Committee should decide on this matter in light of the particular needs.

Bishop Bryce reported that his region had proposed the name of a woman from

⁴ The lists of names are not included in these minutes because they are not yet complete and remain subject to change.

the Methodist Church in Samoa, although she was not a youth.

Eden Grace found it hard to believe that there were no young women in the region who might serve on this commission. If this were the case, it was a problem that this commission must address. She felt the matter should be given back to the churches in the Pacific to see if they had really searched for qualified young women involved in ecumenical formation.

Mr Arthur Norman felt that the Council should maintain its commitment to having 20% youth in all commissions, especially as there were only 15% on Central Committee! Some strong names had been put forward from other regions but they had not been not accepted.

Membership of the Commission on Education was referred back to the Nominations Committee with the request to look at several proposed changes.

At a later point, Dr Kirkpatrick brought back some further nominations; after discussion it was decided to refer the vacancies to the Executive Committee.

The list as proposed, with the addition of a woman representative from the Pacific, was agreed.

4. Faith and Order Plenary Commission

Dr Kirkpatrick reminded members of Central Committee that at their meeting in Harare, they had elected the Standing Commission of Faith and Order. Now they were invited to approve the membership of the Plenary Commission. However, they did not have the possibility of naming alternative persons; any proposals for changes must be referred back to the Faith and Order Standing Commission.

The Nominations Committee had noted four positions for which they would request alternative names; further, there were nine positions still to be filled. It was proposed to request the Standing Commission to continue to work on the matter, and any further names proposed would be referred to the Executive Committee in February for action. A new category of Liaison Officers had been added, to act as a point of contact between the Plenary Commission and CWCs. There was also concern to find some younger theologians below the age of 30; currently those nominated were under 35.

Dr Kirkpatrick *moved* that the list of names be accepted, with the exception of the four positions mentioned above.

The Central Committee agreed to recommend that the Faith and Order Standing Commission:

- la discuss further the matter of representation from the Philippines, giving consideration to the possibility of nominating someone from the Philippine Independent Church;
- 1b discuss further with the Congregational Church of Samoa concerning their representation;
- 1c enter into further conversations with the Church of Pakistan to clarify whether the candidate named still resides in Pakistan. If an alternative needs to be sought, the Standing Commission was requested to give priority to youth;
- 1d discuss further with the Episcopal Church USA with a view to nominating an African-American;
- 2a seek to conclude discussions on the nine remaining places as indicated in the list ready for approval at the next meeting of the Executive Committee;
- 2b enter into discussion with:
 - the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania
 - the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch
 - the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria,
 - seeking confirmation of nominations made at the Central Committee concerning their participation in the Faith and Order Commission;
- discuss with Christian World Communions and nominating bodies regarding the appointment of Liaison Officers.
- 4 replace a representative of the Mennonite Church in Germany by a younger theologian from Switzerland;
- the Central Committee urged Faith and Order to involve more young people in compliance with the WCC guidelines on youth participation. While the Central Committee appreciated the efforts to recruit significantly younger theologians, currently only 1.6% of the Commission was under 30 years of age. There was an impressive resource of younger seminarians across the world who could be involved who were still under 30.

The Central Committee approved the list of names as proposed, with the exception of those mentioned above.

- 5. Advisory Group on Church and Ecumenical Relations
 The list was agreed as proposed.
- 6. Advisory Group on Regional Relations and Ecumenical Sharing Following discussion about one of the names proposed, it was decided to refer this matter to the Executive Committee.

 The rest of the list was agreed as proposed.
- 7. Advisory Group on Inter-Religious Relations
 The list was agreed as proposed.
- 8. Advisory Group on Justice, Peace and Creation The list was agreed as proposed.
- 9. Advisory Group on Women
 It was decided to refer two names to the Executive Committee. The rest of the list was agreed as proposed.
- 10. Advisory Group on Youth
 Following discussion and decision concerning the representatives from the Middle East region, the Central Committee agreed to the list as proposed.
- II. Other Groups
- 11. Joint Consultative Group with Pentecostals
 The list was agreed as proposed.

12. "Non-Orthodox" Membership of the Special Commission

The General Secretary explained that the Orthodox members of the Special Commission were being appointed by the Orthodox Churches according to their own procedures. The Central Committee had the task of appointing the list of 33 non-Orthodox members.

Following discussion about a possible replacement for a nominee from North America, the Central Committee **voted in favour** of the list of non-Orthodox members of the Special Commission as proposed.

13. Advisory Group on Communication

The list was agreed as proposed.

14. Bossey Board

It was noted that the members of the Core Board had been appointed by the Central Committee at its meeting in Harare. The rest of the list was **agreed** as proposed.

15. ACT Emergency Committee

It was noted that this was a joint group, elected partly by the LWF and partly by the WCC. The WCC names on the list were **agreed**.

16. ENI Board

It was reported that Ecumenical News International was in process of becoming a separate corporation under Swiss law. The four members of the Board were elected by the four governing bodies of ENI, the WCC appointee being Rev. Dr Margot Kaessmann. This was agreed.

17. Joint Working Group between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church

It was noted that the JWG had been appointed at Harare, but some changes and replacements were proposed. These were **agreed**.

III. Bylaws of Commissions (see Appendix III)

Dr Kirkpatrick reported that the Bylaws of the Commissions had been studied and amended to come into line with the new structure and constitution of the World Council of Churches. The Executive Committee had approved these with minor amendments, and the Central Committee was asked to confirm this action.

- International Affairs

It was proposed that point 4.1 be amended to be in alignment with the bylaws of other commissions to read:

"..the commission shall be appointed by the Central Committee and shall hold office until the next assembly."

- Commission on World Mission and Evangelism

it was proposed that

- -- point 2.3 be amended to use the language of moderator, vice moderator and coordinator as the designated titles for the officers. This would make it consistent with the bylaws of other commissions;
- -- point 3.3.3 last sentence be replaced with the wording: "... The moderator normally represents the commission and conference on the WCC Programme Committee."
- -- point 3.3.6 replace current text by: "The commission may appoint a small executive group to act on its behalf between meetings of the commission. Such an executive group would include the officers."

- Commission on Faith and Order

It was proposed that the bylaws make provision for up to five vice-moderators.

With regard to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Standing Commission of Faith and Order and the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, it was proposed that this be adopted. It was perfectly in line with the bylaws and functions as a useful explication of them. (See Appendix IV)

The Central Committee **agreed** to the above proposals.

IV. WCC Rules

In line with the changes in the Constitution made at the Harare Assembly, it was reported that the Rules had been adjusted to comply with them. The Executive Committee proposed that the Rules as revised be confirmed by the Central Committee.

The Central Committee agreed.

V. Staffing Report

Mrs Justice Adinyira presented the Staffing Report. She pointed out that the Central Committee was responsible for appointing the general secretary, deputy general secretary(ies), and directors, while the Executive was responsible for other staff appointments in Grades 6 and above.

The Central Committee authorised the General Secretary to proceed with the following appointment, the legal obligations of the World Council of Churches

to be binding only as from the actual signing by both parties of the corresponding contract.

APPOINTMENT

Cluster on Relations

- Ms Geneviève Jacques (France, Reformed Church of France), (currently Executive Secretary, International Affairs), as Director for four years from 1 November 1999 (will complete 7.6 years' service).

INFORMATION

The Executive Committee, at its meeting in August 1999, agreed the following appointments and contract extensions:

I. APPOINTMENTS

Cluster on Issues and Themes - Justice, Peace and Creation

- Rev. Deenabandhu Manchala (India, United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India (UELCI)) be appointed Executive Secretary, Peace Concerns for four years from an agreed date.

Cluster on Relations - International Relations

- Ms Elisabeth G. Ferris (USA, Society of Friends General Conference) (currently Consultant on Uprooted People) be appointed Executive Secretary for three years from 1 November 1999 (will complete 4 years' service).

II CONTRACT EXTENSIONS

All the contracts extensions listed below are for three years unless otherwise stated

Cluster on Issues and Themes - Justice, Peace and Creation

- Rev. Freddy Knutsen (Norway, Church of Norway) Executive Secretary, Youth from 1 January 2000 (will complete 7 years' service)

Education and Ecumenical Formation

- Ms Evelyn Appiah (Ghana, Methodist Church) Executive Secretary, Lay Participation towards Inclusive Community, from 1 February 2001 (will complete 33.5 years' service)

Cluster on Relations - Regional Relations

- Mr William Temu (currently "Interim Africa Secretary") (Tanzania,

Roman Catholic Church) Regional Relations Secretary, Africa, from 1 December 1999 (will complete 6 years' service)

- Mr Alexander Belopopsky (UK, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople [Eastern]) Executive Secretary, Europe, from 1 February 2001 (will complete 8 years' service)

Cluster on Finance, Service and Administration - Finance

- Ms Carol Abel (UK, Church of Ireland [Anglican]) Finance Manager, from 1 January 2000 (will complete 10 years' service)

 Computer and Information Technology Services
- Mr David Pozzi-Johnson (USA, Evangelical Covenant Church in America) Manager, from 1 October 2000 (will complete 13 years' service)

ACT Coordinating Office

- Mr Nils Carstensen (Denmark, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark) ACT Communications Officer, for two years from 1 October 2000 (will complete 6 years' service)

III VACANCIES

Cluster on Issues and Themes - Mission and Evangelism

-- Executive Secretary, Evangelism

Cluster on Finance, Service and Administration - Personnel/Human Resources

-- Human Resources Manager

ACT Coordinating Office

-- Executive secretary for Emergency and Rehabilitation (Team Coordinator)

The Executive Committee **requested** that the Central Committee authorise the Officers to fill urgent vacancies that must be filled prior to the next meeting of the Executive Committee. This was **agreed**.

*

The Executive Committee, at its meeting in February 1999, agreed the following appointment and contract extensions:

I APPOINTMENT

Cluster on Issues and Themes - Team on Justice, Peace, Creation

- Rev. Eugenio Poma Añaguaya (Bolivia, Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia) be appointed Executive Secretary for Indigenous Peoples Issues for three years from 1 March 1999 (will complete 7 years' service)

II CONTRACT EXTENSIONS

The contracts listed below were extended for the periods mentioned:

Cluster on Issues and Themes - Team on Education and Ecumenical Formation

- Rev. Simon Oxley (UK, Baptist Union of Great Britain) Executive Secretary for Education, for three years from 1 May 2000 (will complete 7 years' service)

Cluster on Relations and Constituencies - Team on International Relations - Rev. Dwain Epps (USA, Presbyterian Church [USA]) Executive Secretary, Public Issues/International Affairs for 3 years 1 month from 1

Secretary, Public Issues/International Affairs for 3 years 1 month from 1 August 2000 (until retirement) (will complete 11 years 8 months' service).

REPORT OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

The report of the Programme Committee was presented by Fr K. M. George, moderator of the Committee, and by other members of the Committee.

I. Programme Committee Self-Understanding

The role and task of the Programme Committee is stated in Rule VII of the Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches, as agreed at the Eighth Assembly in December 1998. The Committee is one of the permanent standing committees of the Central Committee. The Central Committee alone can establish WCC policy. The standing committees are responsible for monitoring the implementation of policy decisions. The Programme Committee makes recommendations to the Central Committee on all matters concerning the programmes and activities of the WCC. That is, the Programme Committee has responsibility for the content dimension of the WCC's activities, while the Executive Committee has administrative and supervisory responsibilities.

The Programme Committee is a new body within the life of the WCC and as such it is to be expected that its operation will both clarify and evolve over time.

To enable it in its tasks, the Programme Committee receives advice and recommendations from advisory bodies. These are the Commissions, Board and Advisory Groups of the WCC.

The Programme Committee agreed that the following Advisory Groups be established and requested the endorsement of the Central Committee:

Justice, Peace and Creation Inter-Religious Relations Regional Relations and Ecumenical Sharing Women Church and Ecumenical Relations Youth

Communications

It remitted the appointing of the members of these groups to the Nominations Committee.

In order that the Moderators of all Commissions, Board and Advisory Groups can be represented on it, the Programme Committee recommended to Central Committee that Rule VII, 1.c. be modified to read as follows:

1. The Programme Committee shall consist of

- a Moderator who shall be a member of the Executive Committee
- not more than 30 Central Committee members of whom 2 shall also be b. members of the Executive Committee
- the moderators of all Commissions, Boards and Advisory Groups that C. relate directly to the Programme Committee.

[Italics represent suggested revisions.]

The Central Committee agreed to these recommendations.

To enable it to fulfil its task, the Programme Committee requested that the Commissions, Board and Advisory Groups submit reports to it.

II. Priority Setting and Evaluation for Programmes

The Programme Committee received with appreciation and reviewed carefully a document "Objectives and Areas of Responsibility of the Teams." Many suggestions for change and addition had been offered from the floor; these would be developed in the form of a memorandum for distribution to the commissions, board and advisory groups, together with other material, for planning and discussion. The groups would be invited to respond and to suggest revisions for consideration by the Programme Committee in the future.

The Programme Committee also discussed criteria to be used in the setting of priorities. The following criteria were formulated. The Programme Committee requested that Central Committee **adopt** the following criteria under the titles "Institutional Frame," "Programme Management Tool," and "Evaluation."

Institutional Frame

All programmes should meet the following criteria:

1. The Programme should relate to the Common Understanding and Vision (CUV) process and should reflect coherently the theological interrelationships of the different WCC activities.

The following questions should be asked:

- 1.1. Mission / Purpose: Is the Programme consistent with the main thrusts implied by the CUV? How does it carry through the spirit of the assembly?
- 1.2. Fellowship: How does the programme bring member churches into creative interaction with each other in witness and *diakonia*, allowing them to engage together and thus to build, grow and journey in fellowship? How inclusive is the programme?
- 1.3. Coherence / Integration: How does the programme relate to the four themes of the framework of the WCC for the current seven-year period? What is the advice of the appropriate Commission, Board or Advisory Group? What other programmes link into this programme?

Programme Management Tool

- 2. The Programme should be feasible. The following criteria are arranged in priority order:
- 2.1. Relevance: What is the relevance of the programme to member churches through their own perception and through the perception of others? What is the uniqueness of this programme as a programme of the WCC?
- 2.2. Urgency: What is the urgency of the programme?

- from the perspective of the world context;
- from the perspective of member churches.
- 2.3. Impact: Will the expected and hoped-for outcomes of the programme have high impact?
- 2.4. Effectiveness: Can the outcomes be achieved effectively and efficiently? What are the economic implications of the programme? Are there likely partners and networks for the programme, and who are they?
- 2.5. Centrality: Is this programme central to other programmes in the sense that they rely on it for their own feasibility?
- 3. The Programme should emerge through prayer and reflection. The following questions should be asked:
- 3.1. Newness: If the programme does not easily meet the above criteria, does it contain an element of risk that may be prophetic and thus is it appropriate? Does the programme deal with a newly emerging issue or context?
- 3.2. Learning: What can the WCC, member churches, and the ecumenical movement learn from this programme, e.g., about methods, partnering, and communication?

Evaluation

The above criteria will also serve in evaluating programmes during their implementation and at their completion. In addition, the following questions should be asked:

- Have the results been communicated to member churches and other relevant bodies?
- How has the programme been received by the churches?
- How has the programme engaged, involved and ecumenically challenged the member churches in their own life and witness?

This is a first attempt at formulating criteria, and the Programme Committee will revisit them on a regular basis in the light of responses from consultative bodies and staff.

The Programme Committee also intends to provide a report to the Central Committee on the implementation of the criteria for priority setting and evaluation of the programmes already planned and underway in the three-year plans presented to this Central Committee.

Discussion

Dr Granberg-Michaelson expressed appreciation for the criteria, which he felt would be helpful to staff in prioritising and understanding how the activities undertaken would implement the CUV process. But how did these criteria relate to the three-year plan for programmes that were already underway? How were the two connected? He proposed that the Programme Committee report to the next Central Committee on the implementation of the criteria for priority setting and evaluation. Otherwise the criteria might remain unconnected to what was actually going on.

In order to avoid duplication of work, Rev. Erica Mathiesen suggested the addition of another criterion asking whether a particular programme was already being undertaken by any other body/organisation.

Canon Bakkevig was concerned that decisions regarding budget and programmes should be made in the same place. If management tools and criteria were developed without considering what was already being done, how would we know whether or not to change a programme? It was important to develop thinking which linked these together.

Responding to these remarks, the General Secretary affirmed that this was precisely the difficulty that had had to be dealt with in the Executive and Programme Committees. In order to provide the information required in June by the funding partners, we had to tell them that it was subject to the action that would be taken by Central Committee only in September. It would therefore be necessary to revise earlier proposals as the final planning could only be done once the policy directions and criteria for priority-setting had been approved. For the year 2000 the Council would enter a phase of operational planning in which these criteria would provide the tool for setting priorities. Only if we have a tool could this be done in a transparent way.

Regarding the link between programme planning and financial decisions, the Rules provided for joint membership to make sure that both the Finance Committee and the Programme Committee were aware of the ongoing work of the other, as well as of the Finance Sub-committee of the Executive. In structural terms the link was provided for; the question was how it was to be operated in practice.

Rev. Ruth Bottoms continued presenting the report:

III. Finance

The Programme Committee appointed some of its members to liaise with the Finance Committee and heard back from them the concern that it would be unrealistic to plan for an increase in activities due to income projections.

The Programme Committee affirmed the need to consider economic factors in programme setting but also affirmed that this would not be the first priority.

IV. Continuing to Build the Post-Assembly Agenda: A Perspective up to the Next Assembly

A document "Building the Post-Assembly Agenda: A Perspective up to the Next Assembly" had been presented to the Central Committee, discussed and then referred to the Programme Committee for consideration. The Committee received it with gratitude and recognized the extensive work done by staff and by a small working group.

This document had been developed as an extension of the Harare Assembly Programme Guidelines Committee report. The intention was to recognize the amendment to Article III of the WCC Constitution concerning the Council's "Purposes and Functions" with its renewed emphasis on being a fellowship of churches. Thus, an overall conceptual framework could be developed "to support, integrate and interpret" the activities of the WCC in relationship to the member churches of the Council.

It was recognized that this document had been a valuable stimulus for discussion by the Central Committee in its plenary sessions and in its small group work. Suggestions were taken into consideration by the Programme Committee. The section in the paper called "Deepening and broadening the fellowship" was strongly affirmed. Across the Council and its member churches there was appreciation of the study and consultation, "Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC." The paper highlighted the change in Article III and raised important issues arising from these new understandings. The Programme Committee affirmed the dynamic character of the "fellowship of churches" and sought to realize Harare's call to "move together" and to "build together." Following the lead of the Assembly Programme Guidelines Committee, the

Programme Committee recommended that all activities of the Council be founded within the self-understanding and vision articulated constitutionally by the WCC. The document could continue to be helpful in reflecting upon these issues.

The Programme Committee believed that it would be important in the on-going communication of the life and work of the WCC that staff, members of Central Committee and member churches could articulate a brief framework for the shaping of the work in the next seven years. Within the newly organized structure of the WCC, staff teams would need to coordinate their work across programmatic lines within this framework.

The Programme Committee reflected upon the responses of Central Committee members to the document mentioned and offered an adapted framework for the activities of the Council. The Programme Committee recommended, and the Central Committee agreed, that the following themes be adopted as a framework for the Council's future work:

- (1) Being Church
- (2) Caring for Life
- (3) Ministry of Reconciliation
- (4) Common Witness and Service amidst Globalization.

Being Church

Members of the Council have been called upon through the CUV process to deepen as well as to broaden the fellowship we share as churches. Our witness and service to the world depended upon strengthening spiritually the bonds of commitment and accountability we have to one another. The Assembly Programme Guidelines Committee (PGC) articulated the following four questions as central to the purposes of the Council:

- How do we as churches engage together in mission and evangelism in the midst of a highly pluralistic world?
- How do we understand baptism as a foundation for the life in community to which we are called to share together?
- How do we offer together our resources, witness and action for the sake of the world's very future?
- How do we walk together on the path towards visible unity?

The Assembly PGC went on to say: "Before we meet again in assembly, the life of each member church must be addressed ecumenically with these four questions" (Assembly report, p. 149). Given the different ecclesiologies within the WCC, the search for the oneness of the church and the quest for a more visible unity remains at the heart of the life of the Council and needs to be discussed by member churches in each region of the world.

Being church calls for an "inclusive community" that gives visibility and increased participation to many who have been marginalized in the life of the church, such as women, youth, children, indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities. The Council can encourage and support "safe arenas for dialogue" (p. 144). "Inclusive community" does not only mean physical presence. Some youth participants, for example, spoke of their desire for full participation and integration in the work of the member churches, the Council, and its committees, groups, etc. A call for an inclusive community also challenges churches divided by racial and/or ethnic identity. The Faith and Order Commission has developed studies that can assist the WCC in exploring the challenges this call places before us. We are all called to engage in continuing ecumenical formation.

Caring for Life

As the Assembly Programme Guidelines Committee said, "Calling the churches to unity beckons them to turn, in response to God's transforming love in Christ, to the world's suffering and need, and to act together" (p. 142). Caring for life calls for service (diakonia) to the world as essential to our life together as churches in Christ. Faithfulness to the gospel calls us to embrace the "groaning of the creation". It is a response to God's boundless love and a caring for the creation that sustains us. At Harare and at this Central Committee meeting, presentations on the situation and life in Africa lead us to recognize the importance of ongoing solidarity and of accountability for what has led to the present moment.

Caring for life furthers the WCC's earlier work on building communities with the marginalized and excluded; sustainability, Theology of Life and a life-centred ethic, the culture of peace and non-violence, and upholding the right and dignity of people. At the same time, new attention is needed to the spiritual dimensions of caring for life, particularly as these relate to ethical questions arising from biotechnology, birth control, abortion, and human sexuality. The Assembly PGC

report makes a helpful linkage between Christian anthropology, biblical hermeneutics, ethics and culture (p.145). (An example of the earlier work is the Joint Working Group document "The Ecumenical Dialogue on Moral Issues: Potential Sources of Common Witness or Divisions" that was cited in the Assembly Programme Guidelines Report, p.145). A similarly comprehensive approach could be fruitful for future WCC work on gender, beyond the Ecumenical Decade. Indeed, a distorted understanding of Christian anthropology is one of the sources that feeds the culture of violence against women.

Ministry of Reconciliation

The assembly theme, "Turn to God - Rejoice in Hope" is a reminder of the ongoing need for both personal transformation and the renewal of communities. The Assembly Programme Guidelines Committee report reminds us that "the foundation of all our ecumenical engagement is our response to God. It asks for nothing less than the conversion of our hearts" (p.143). The unity and reconciliation we seek can only be found when centred in worship, prayer and a shared spiritual life and shared community.

God in Christ has reconciled us to himself and entrusted us with this ministry of reconciliation. Reconciliation to God, our neighbours and ourselves is an ongoing challenge and must be accompanied by a search for truth, justice and peace. The assembly proclaimed a Decade to Overcome Violence that encourages our churches to challenge the powers and principalities that perpetuate violence in our world. The issue of violence between racial and ethnic groups has frequently been highlighted. Through the coming years until the next assembly and until the end of the Decade, the Council shall work strategically with the churches to create a "culture of non-violence" linking and interacting with partners throughout the world. When churches and ecumenical bodies work to build this culture through dialogue, sharing and reconciliation, the implications for their own witness and work need exploration.

Common Witness and Service amidst Globalization

The challenge of globalization is as much a theological, spiritual and ecclesiological challenge as it is an economic and political one. As the Assembly Programme Guidelines Committee reported: "The love of God, expressed fully in Christ, reveals a vision of fullness of life for all; the emerging global economy projects a vision of limitless material gratification for those who can afford it"

(p.146). In the face of this challenge, the WCC, its member churches, and partner organizations are called to respond to the many-faceted reality of globalization.

The growth of religious plurality is another ecumenical concern intimately related to the process of globalization. Discussions of changing understandings of mission and evangelism (including issues of religious freedom and proselytism) will thus form an important and discrete element in an ecumenical response to globalization. More than once the Assembly PGC report urges increased explorations with partners of other faith communities of how common commitments to human rights and dignity can be translated into a global framework of values to which all can subscribe.

Fr George presented the next part of the report.

V. Decade to Overcome Violence -Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace

The Programme Committee responded to the request of the Central Committee to develop the programmatic implementation of the *Decade to Overcome Violence*. A small group was appointed which developed a document containing a "basic architecture" for consideration by the Programme Committee. Small group responses were also considered in the document's development.

The Programme Committee revised the document (see Appendix VI) and recommended that the Central Committee receive it as a working document. This was agreed.

Discussion

Ms Bosien pointed out this Decade was a consequence of the work done on the conciliar process, and she urged that some continuity be maintained in our terminology so that those who had already been involved in the past would recognise this development.

Mr Roberts felt that the Decade should be carried out in a creative way with the member churches. So much of the programmatic work of the Council was done by staff, and he urged that the approach here should involve the member

churches from the outset, giving them the feeling that they had some influence on the process. He wondered what had happened to the proposal to form a reference group for the Decade - this might assist the churches in shaping the direction of the Decade.

He hoped the Decade would draw on the experience of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, as well as of the Theology of Life programme. Communicating the Decade would be crucial, requiring high quality materials that capture the imagination.

VI. Three-Year Plans

The Programme Committee recorded its deep appreciation to the staff for the hard work they had done in providing a first account for plans for the years 2000-2002.

Suggestions for programmatic activities received from the small group meetings were referred to the appropriate staff, commissions, board and advisory groups.

The Programme Committee received reports from the Faith and Order Standing Commission and the Bossey Board which had met in the period between the Assembly and the Central Committee. These gave the Programme Committee a first chance to be involved in relating the framework themes and criteria for priority setting to actual programmes, though obviously the Standing Commission and the Board had done their work before these had been fully articulated.

The Programme Committee recommended that the Central Committee:

- affirm the recommendation of the Faith and Order Standing Commission concerning its plans;
- encourage the Faith and Order Standing Commission and staff to continue to undertake the recommended activities in the spirit of the collaborative style of the work of the Council;
- request that prioritization and evaluation in line with the agreed criteria now be a part of the work of the staff and Commission.

The Programme Committee recommended that the Central Committee:

- express its appreciation to the Bossey Board for its contribution to the

- positive and promising developments in the life of the Ecumenical Institute;
- encourage the Bossey Board and Faculty to continue in the spirit of the collaborative style of the work of the Council;
- affirm the Bossey Programme for the year 2000;
- request that prioritization and evaluation in line with the agreed criteria now be a part of the framework.

Discussion

Dr Raiser said he understood the dilemma in which members of Central Committee found themselves: they were asked to approve a text but had not seen the relevant documentation. He hoped nevertheless that they would develop a sense of confidence and endorse such action as was proposed by one of its subcommittees.

Dr Best, moderating this session, regretted that Central Committee had not had opportunity to hear details about the plans of Faith and Order and Bossey, so she invited the respective moderators to highlight a few items from their programme plans.

Rev. Dr Robert Welsh, moderator of the Bossey Board, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share some reflections with Central Committee. The Board was calling for a higher quality of academic programming which would mean having two Graduate School sessions each year in partnership with the University of Geneva, plus a master's degree programme offered through the University, beginning from September 2000.

The opening celebration of the current Graduate School had taken place the previous evening, with 45 students from all over the world. His request to the Central Committee was not so much for financial support for Bossey; rather he urged that they provide support by sending the best possible students from the member churches, in order to give Bossey opportunity to help train them for leadership in the Council and in the ecumenical movement of the future.

Rev. Dr David Yemba, moderator of the Faith and Order Standing Commission spoke of the meeting of the Commission in Toronto. Faith and Order had a number of ongoing tasks, but also took into consideration recommendations from

ecumenical gatherings including the Harare Assembly. He requested Dr Alan Falconer to report on recent major studies.

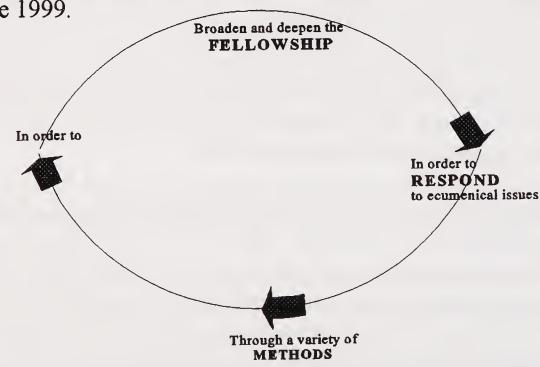
Dr Falconer noted that prior to Harare, Faith and Order had produced a consensus statement on the *Nature of the Church*, and were currently seeking responses to this. They also wished to develop this with other churches in terms of ecclesiology and mission. Another important issue was that of ministry and ordination in the community of women and men in the church. Work on *Ethnic Identity and National Identity* was continuing through case studies, while the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle (1989) was being revised using modern technology. Further, they were beginning to explore the nature and identity of what it means to be human - human sexuality, ethnic identity, and violence.

The Central Committee agreed to the above recommendations.

Mr Victor Avasi presented the next section of the report.

VII. Communication

The Programme Committee received a report based on a paper called "Communication Strategies" that had been presented to the Programme Core Group in June 1999.



The Programme Committee **recommended** to the Central Committee that the following management priorities, objectives and principles be used as a basis for the communication strategy of the WCC, taking account of the comments made by the Programme Committee (as recorded below).

Management priorities:

- Making the WCC more visible and more responsive to its constituency;
- Making the WCC more visible to the wider public;
- Letting the WCC be recognized as viable and vital;
- Developing a working style that is pro-active, flexible, and responsive to the priorities of the WCC.

Objectives for communication in the WCC:

- To build fellowship;
- To work towards a coherent and credible profile of the WCC;
- To help empower local communities to interpret and contextualize the ecumenical movement and the WCC;
- To hear from member churches their perspectives on the ecumenical movement and to receive their proposals for action by the WCC;
- To reflect the rich variety of resources in the churches and communities of the WCC constituency;
- To promote the study, analysis and interpretation of the full range of ecumenical issues;
- To ensure the preservation of ecumenical memory in order to build on the past while working towards the future;
- To access both secular and church media.

Principles of communication:

Communication done through and about the WCC will be:

- Ecumenical: forming a mosaic of national, regional, cultural, ethnic and confessional interests;
- Ethical: regarding both the content and the use and abuse of the means of communication;
- Conscious that:
 - communication dimensions are part of the planning of any WCC initiative or cooperation;
 - members of the WCC governing bodies are key communicators;
 - there are multiple media forms that need to be used;
- Participatory:
 - use an expanded network of people who reflect the full range of regional, cultural and confessional groups in the WCC,

- work with existing communication networks and create new networks on national and regional levels;
- Accessible:
 - technically, financially, linguistically;
- Interactive;
- Educational.

Comments from the Programme Committee

Communication is understood to be central to all aspects of the work of the WCC and as such is a process which starts in the initial phases of shaping programmes. It is not simply a matter of getting messages out once a programme or initiative is underway.

Reference is needed to solidarity work with local communities to empower communicators, a process that implies mutuality in learning and sharing communication services.

All member churches, not just those represented on the Central Committee, need to be part of the expanded network referred to in the above strategies.

There should be a focus on Africa in communication about activities and initiatives in the WCC.

Ways should be identified of telling stories about the WCC that are appropriate to each WCC region, e.g. in some regions finding places for alternative voices in the media can be done by telling the stories of individuals involved in the work of the WCC.

The Central Committee agreed to the above recommendations.

The Central Committee received the report of the Programme Committee with appreciation.

REPORT OF POLICY REFERENCE COMMITTEE I

The report was presented by Rev. Kathrin Bannister, moderator of the PR Committee I. The response to the Moderator's and General Secretary's reports are included under those items (see pp. 25-27).

I. Assembly Evaluation

The PR Committee's discussion on the assembly took place with reference to a document "Reporting on the Eighth Assembly", the report of the General Secretary, small group reports and comments made in the plenary discussion.

The PR Committee brought the following revised recommendations for action by the Central Committee, with the understanding that the results of the process of reflection on the nature and purpose of the assembly proposed above may modify these recommendations:

- 1. that the length of the Ninth Assembly be at least 13 or 14 days if the present nature and style of assembly is maintained, and that careful consideration be given to the venue and to the design of the flow of the programme, allowing for adequate rest for participants, for contact with the local context and for processing of assembly business;
- 2. that more attention (time and budget) be given during the preparation of the Ninth Assembly to facilitating team visits and regional and sub-regional meetings in order to increase communication, to promote fellowship among the churches, to broaden and deepen the impact on local churches and to encourage more adequate preparation of delegates and delegations;
- 3. that the Programme Committee establish clear criteria for the evaluation of the work of the World Council of Churches over the next period and that these criteria be used in the evaluation process at the assembly. We recommend that the Assembly review of WCC work engage the plenary as a whole;

that the Programme Committee establish a clear preparatory process for the discerning of future directions at the Ninth Assembly and that more time be allotted to this required work by the assembly; 4. that insofar as possible, major issues for the Ninth Assembly be selected and prepared in advance in a consultative process in which the Central Committee is involved and the documents sent to delegates, member churches and ecumenical partners in advance;

that a first and second reading for each major issue be scheduled so that committees may incorporate written responses to the documents and allow more plenary time for the discussion of significant and difficult issues;

- 5. that the reading of speeches and documents be limited in plenary sessions as much as possible and more time given to plenary discussions;
- 6. that the idea of Padare, renamed in a contextually appropriate way, be given expression in future assemblies, with attention to the number of offerings, space limitations, foci of issues and the connection with the work of the assembly;
- 7. that, in addition to ensuring balanced coverage in the assembly newspaper and in the press releases at the assembly, the assembly itself be seen as a communication event, including its very design, the use of symbolic acts, the variety of presentation style, more accessible language, shorter and more readable documents;
- 8. that the holding of pre-assembly events be thoroughly reviewed in relation to constituencies, timing, venue possibilities and staff resources.

The Central Committee voted in favour of the above recommendations.

Responding to a question about the length of time required for preparing the assembly, the General Secretary explained that an Assembly Planning Committee (APC) was normally appointed from among members of Central Committee, as an additional standing sub-committee of CC and accountable to it, to begin work at least three years prior to the assembly. In addition, the Central Committee would have to decide on the venue and theme of the assembly. The APC would deal with logistical preparations, and design the framework and content. Ad hoc groups would have to be formed for specific tasks, while the host churches would set up their own corresponding committees to cooperate with the APC.

With regard to the nominations process, efforts had been made prior to Harare to give member churches an opportunity to address this issue among themselves. Unfortunately not all churches responded to the invitation to consult among each other as to who should be considered as their representative on Central Committee. The process was more transparent this time than in the past, and hopefully next time there would be further improvement.

II. Proposal for a Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organizations

The PR Committee received a summary report of the recent meeting of the Continuation Committee on the Forum proposal and noted some significant suggestions and next steps which it wished to bring to the attention of the Central Committee:

- a) the resolve of the Continuation Committee to continue exploring the desirability and possibilities of the Forum proposal, extending the time-line initially suggested in the document which was shared with the Eighth Assembly;
- b) the suggestion of the Continuation Committee to consider whether a series of "workshops" or fora on specific issues could lay the groundwork for a later Forum event or events;
- c) the decision of the Continuation Committee, as a next step in the process, to seriously engage Evangelical and Pentecostal constituencies and to convene in September 2000 a consultation bringing together persons from these churches and members of the Continuation Committee. The purpose of the Consultation would be to explore with these partners the interest in the development of the Forum, as well as the nature, composition and potential agendas.

The PR Committee expressed support for continuing to explore the possibilities of the Forum proposal and for the direction taken by the Continuation Committee, and suggested that the churches and ecumenical partners should be kept informed. The Forum should not become an alternative to or a replacement for the WCC, and the Council should continue to pay attention to possible implications of the Forum proposal for its own structure and future.

Discussion

Rev. John Roberts regretted that the Central Committee had not received information about the responses received from member churches to the Forum proposal, nor had it been given opportunity to discuss the matter at an earlier session. Since his church had responded negatively to the proposal, he was concerned lest further steps be taken without adequate discussion in Central Committee.

Several speakers underlined the importance of the statement that the Forum "not become an alternative to or a replacement for the WCC".

Dr Tsetsis recalled that the idea of a Forum had emerged from the need to engage churches which were not within the fellowship of the Council. He was therefore in agreement with the idea of continuing to explore possibilities of engaging with Evangelicals and Pentecostals. He stressed that a Forum without the participation of the Roman Catholic Church would not be acceptable and that similar explorations should be made with the RCC.

Msgr Radano (Roman Catholic Church) also stressed the need to keep in mind that, from the beginning, one of the intentions had been to find a way to engage those Christians who were neither members of the WCC nor involved in the ecumenical movement, but who react to the Council and the Roman Catholic Church in seeking channels of communication with others. Some concern had been expressed that, if the Forum idea became too much associated with the WCC, there might be less possibility of drawing in those whom we were seeking to draw in.

Msgr Radano appreciated the concern expressed by several members of Central Committee to ensure that the RCC was involved in the process. He gave an assurance that the Roman Catholics saw themselves as already deeply involved in the ecumenical movement in many ways, and, although not members of the World Council, they were full members of Faith and Order. They were also represented on the Continuation Committee of the Forum.

Dr Kirkpatrick felt it would be important to work further on this matter at the next meeting of Central Committee, with the hope of coming to a common mind and direction for moving forward. The Forum would need to be placed in the

context of the basic vision of the ecumenical movement: the end product being sought was not a world council but a universal fellowship of the churches in our time. How we broaden the ecumenical movement - involving the RCC, Evangelicals, Pentecostals - was crucial. He urged that the Forum have a major place on the agenda at the next meeting.

Dr Granberg-Michaelson affirmed that his church was in favour of exploring further the Forum proposal which he saw as a reality that was still in the future. If the Council were to be a vehicle of the wider ecumenical movement, maintaining its coherence and advancing its vision, the Forum was a possible means for doing that.

Bishop Pagura agreed with the need to focus more clearly and obtain a sharper vision of what the Forum might be, looking clearly towards the future at the idea of a wider council bringing people together. It was important to think in terms of a debate about the future of humankind and of our role within this as a family of faith.

The Moderator felt that a clear definition of the Forum was needed, since the unclarity about it was generating some fears. The first thing was therefore to continue the exploration: this was a recommendation from Harare and we must reaffirm our commitment to this process.

Secondly, it was important to articulate clearly that the intention of the Forum was to engage the churches and ecumenical partners in the ecumenical movement. The Council had a role to play here, bringing in communities in different parts of the world which were not yet fully engaged in the ecumenical movement. Thirdly, as a Council, it was necessary to know what the position of the member churches was about the idea of the Forum.

III. Relations with Christian World Communions (CWCs)

The PR Committee discussed some aspects of the relationships and cooperation of the WCC with the Christian World Communions, in light of the action of the Eighth Assembly and the recent decision of the Council of the Lutheran World Federation to seek to initiate a direct dialogue with the WCC on future relations and patterns of cooperation. Regarding the results of bilateral dialogues between CWCs, the question was raised whether ways could be found to receive and

celebrate significant agreements and achievements of such dialogues within the wider ecumenical "family" of the WCC.

Having in mind the important role of the CWCs and the need to avoid as much as possible the duplication of programme work and activities, the PR Committee recommended, and the Central Committee agreed:

- 1. to welcome the decision of the LWF Council to seek a dialogue with the WCC on relations and cooperation, and to respond positively to this initiative;
- 2. to request the General Secretary that specific plans be developed for close cooperation on programmes and activities, particularly with those CWCs whose membership was largely within the Council's constituency. A report on such plans should be given to the Central Committee at its next meeting.

IV. Relations with Regional Ecumenical Organizations

The PR Committee was informed about the ongoing process of consultation on relationships and cooperation between the WCC and Regional Ecumenical Organizations.

The PR Committee, welcoming the progress made, recommended, and the Central Committee agreed:

to request the General Secretary and staff to pursue these efforts, in order to reach a fuller understanding of the common ecumenical agenda, work more closely together and ensure the best possible use of resources.

V. Relations with International Ecumenical Organizations

The PR Committee took note of the need to develop creative ways of cooperation and partnership between the WCC and related International Ecumenical Organizations.

VI. Study on Membership

The PR Committee discussed a proposal, which had been considered by the Executive Committee, to initiate a comprehensive study on the issue of membership and membership criteria, and took note of the Executive's decision

to wait until the Special Commission had outlined its agenda and future work. Members of the PR Committee affirmed the need for such a study, which could either be entrusted to the Special Commission or to a group formed for this purpose. The Faith and Order Commission should be involved because of the theological and ecclesiological aspects of the issue. The PR Committee identified a need for criteria founded on the Scriptures and on Tradition. The Council should not wait too long to do this study, as applications for membership continued to be received.

The PR Committee also affirmed the need to deal appropriately with the applications presently in hand from some 25 churches which were awaiting a response. As there had been no decision to put membership applications on hold, the Council should proceed on the basis of the existing criteria, while recognizing that new criteria might result from the study.

VII. Minimum Membership Contribution

The Eighth Assembly instructed the Central Committee at its first meeting to decide how Rule I.6.c on not fulfilling the financial obligations (of membership) shall be interpreted and inform the member churches accordingly.

Rule I.6.c reads: *The implications of such obligations* (i.e. the financial obligations of the member churches as stated in Rule I.6. a and b) *shall be such as the Central Committee shall decide*.

The General Secretary pointed out that for the greater part of the Council's history, no minimum membership contribution had been required. As this was a basic change of understanding, member churches could not be expected to grasp the implications immediately. Therefore communication was of particular importance - not just communicating decisions of Central Committee and expecting the churches to comply, but finding imaginative ways of conveying the message to them. This would require the cooperation also of members of Central Committee in terms of encouraging their churches to fulfil their obligations.

The Office of Income Monitoring and Development (IMD) was working on an index, developing criteria with regard to what would be an adequate contribution by each church, taking external economic factors of the country into account as well as the internal factors of a given church. Cooperation from the member

churches was needed to help work towards an instrument for this. We need to maintain the spirit on which the Council has been founded and which, through CUV, we have been reaffirming: that the Council is a fellowship of churches, sharing resources. We must not lose that spirit by turning it into a quota system.

The PR Committee discussed a set of considerations and suggestions forwarded by the Executive Committee, regarding the question of member churches not fulfilling the *minimum* financial obligation of membership (of CHF 1,000 as fixed by the Central Committee in 1995). Taking into account the comments received on this matter from the Finance Committee, the PR Committee recommended, and after further discussion which resulted in some amendments to the text, the Central Committee **agreed** as follows:

- 1. to affirm that the payment of the minimum annual membership contribution must be a priority concern of all members of the governing bodies of the Council and all staff;
- 2. to call on all member churches which presently do not pay their minimum membership contribution to comply with the obligation as soon as possible and at the latest by September 2001;
- 3. in order to achieve this goal, to request the General Secretary to communicate with the churches concerned in the most effective way, and report to the Executive Committee at its meeting in September 2001;
- 4. to allow that, in the case of member churches which, for reasons that need to be stated and agreed upon, were unable to meet the minimum fee of CHF 1,000, a lower minimum amount could be fixed in mutual consultation between the church and the Council;
- 5. to request the Finance Committee, in the case of those churches which did not meet their agreed obligations, to reconsider the eligibility of these churches to receive subsidies;
- 6. to ask the Executive Committee at its meeting in September 2001 to fix the date by which the above measure becomes effective and to inform the church(es) concerned.

The PR Committee was aware that there were member churches which could reasonably be expected to contribute more than the minimum amount of CHF 1,000. The PR Committee recommended, and the Central Committee agreed:

7. to request the General Secretary to consider also the possible implications in such cases and to bring appropriate suggestions to the Executive Committee at its next meeting.

The last section of the report of Policy Reference Committee I was presented by Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson:

VIII. Report of the Officers

The PR Committee recommended, and the Central Committee agreed:

to receive with warm appreciation the report of the officers on the work of the Executive Committee.

IX. Relations with the Roman Catholic Church

The PR Committee discussed some aspects of the relationships and cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church, and of the work of the Joint Working Group. It noted with satisfaction that the composition of the new JWG included representatives of national and regional councils, which reflected the increasing participation of the Roman Catholic Church in these bodies. Several areas were mentioned where the existing cooperation could be strengthened and extended, e.g., the Decade to Overcome Violence, the involvement of youth and the communication of the results of the work of the JWG to the local churches.

X. Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC

The PR Committee was informed of the informal meeting of nominated and appointed members of the Special Commission on Orthodox participation in the WCC present at this meeting of the Central Committee. It welcomed the progress made in preparing the first full meeting of the Special Commission regarding dates, agenda, etc. The PR Committee affirmed that the work of the Commission should be understood in terms of a dialogue of member churches on common concerns that have emerged in the life of the Council.

XI. Relations with Pentecostals

The PR Committee discussed some of the concerns and issues which could become part of the agenda of the Joint Consultative Group with Pentecostals established at this meeting of the Central Committee. Among the concerns mentioned were the self-understanding of the church and its accountability to the wider community of churches, mutual understanding of baptism, mission and proselytism, etc. The Joint Consultative Group could benefit from earlier work done by the Council regarding the charismatic movement, from the experience of Pentecostal member churches in the WCC and in national and regional councils (e.g. Korea, Latin America), and from the international Roman Catholic Church / Pentecostal dialogue and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches / Pentecostal dialogue. The task ahead was not an easy one, but new things could happen when human relationships develop under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Policy Reference Committee I expressed its appreciation to the staff of the Team on Church and Ecumenical Relations for the service they were providing in efforts to deepen and broaden the fellowship of the WCC.

The Central Committee **received** the report of Policy Reference Committee I with appreciation.

REPORT OF POLICY REFERENCE COMMITTEE II

Dr Agnes Abuom presented the report of Policy Reference Committee II.

I. Preliminaries: the Committee's mandate and task

The PR Committee spent considerable time initially on clarifying its task and removing misunderstandings concerning its role within the new structure which had aroused some confusion and frustration. After discussion, the Committee accepted its task and agenda as follows:

- to reflect on and refer to the Central Committee issues that had emerged through the deliberative processes (small groups, Padare, regional meetings, Africa plenary) and were of significance to the ecumenical agenda and our continuing journey as churches, both individually and together;

- to consider and make recommendations to the Central Committee on:
 - a) the concept and methodology of Padare;
 - b) the role and place of the "regional plenary" in light of the experience of the Africa plenary;
 - c) the draft message on the Decade to Overcome Violence;
- to identify for further consideration issues emerging from the Regional Meetings.

II. Padare

After lengthy discussion, the PR Committee unanimously agreed that the concept of Padare provided valuable "open space", free and safe, enabling Central Committee to share insights, concerns and experiences. It was felt that there was scope within Padare to include sessions that facilitated maximum interaction and some that had a more educational function and presentational mode: some should feed into the Central Committee agenda and others would enable Central Committee members to get to know one another and their respective contexts better. It was decided, after discussion, that the use of the term "Padare" was not inappropriate outside Africa: this was an African contribution to the ecumenical vocabulary to be developed, applied and understood in particular local contexts.

The PR Committee recommended that:

- a) provision be made for Padare in future Central Committee meetings;
- b) members of Central Committee be invited beforehand to offer suggestions for content or to lead sessions in Padare;
- c) decisions about the topics and arrangements (number, length of sessions, etc.) be made by the Executive Committee and involve careful preparation;
- d) a small Padare "listening group" be appointed to accompany the process during Central Committee meetings;
- e) within Padare there be flexibility as to the possibility of different approaches (as described above);
- f) there be flexibility also as to whether Padare sessions might link with the Central Committee agenda or be free-standing explorations of particular topics of concern;
- g) consideration be given to the possibility of adopting the Padare approach in certain plenary sessions of Central Committee.

There was some discussion as to whether the term *padare* was appropriate outside Africa, and although some did not agree, the general consensus was that the concept could be applied in other contexts outside Africa. Others stressed that *padare* should be a place of freedom, where people were free to speak on an issue; the idea of organising them as a series of themes seemed to contradict the intention. Another suggestion was that *padare* be seen as part of the reflection of Central Committee, integrating *padare* into the total work of the Council.

The Central Committee agreed to the above recommendations.

Arising out of discussion on the feedback on the ten Padare sessions within the current Central Committee meeting:

- a) recommendations were passed to the Programme Committee concerning:
 - the continuation of the Protestant/Orthodox dialogue through the Special Commission and further conversations at future Central Committee meetings;
 - specific urgent initiatives for WCC and CEC concerning the situation in the Balkans, and Kosovo in particular;
 - support for the proposed youth programme on ecumenical formation and leadership;
 - greater priority for (cross-team) programmes on ecumenical spirituality;
- b) the PR Committee recommended that the next Central Committee meeting include a full deliberative plenary on such issues relating to world trade, international economics, etc. as had been explored in the WTO session in Padare.

The Central Committee agreed.

III. Africa Plenary

Appreciation was expressed for the opportunity in the two Africa plenary sessions to follow up issues raised at the Harare Assembly. But a number of delegates expressed the view that the sessions had not advanced the discussion significantly or provided an adequate opportunity for those from outside Africa to consider how they might accompany the African churches in meeting the challenges facing them. In particular, regret was expressed that there had been little consideration of the paper "Africa: Challenges for the Ecumenical Movement" (see Appendix V) and the issues it raised, as these provided a

valuable conceptual framework for continuing work within the Africa programme.

Dr Kobia reminded participants of the Consolidated Africa Programme which had been a major task of the Council in the period preceding the Assembly, noting that this process had led to the Africa plenary at Harare. The Assembly had recommended that Africa become the focus for the next period. Following up on this work staff were trying to move from the analysis that had been done to more concrete work in Africa in order to give expression to that special focus on Africa, giving content to the programmatic work to be done in the coming period.

The PR Committee recommended that there should be further work, in the specific context of Africa, through an integrated approach on:

- a) the impact of war and conflict (recognising the links with the Decade to Overcome Violence), micro-disarmament, children and women in armed conflict situations;
- b) economic justice, including economic globalisation, debt and governance from the perspective of human rights and human dignity;
- c) spirituality and the promotion of ethical values that enhance life with dignity in sustainable community.

The Central Committee agreed.

IV. Regional Plenaries

The value of Regional Plenaries was strongly affirmed as way of enabling churches to engage in dialogue, to listen to the voices of those coming from the region, and informing about the ecumenical agenda.

The PR Committee recommended, and the Central Committee agreed

that Regional Plenaries be a regular feature of Central Committee meetings (but not necessarily to the exclusion of deliberative plenaries on other topics).

After consideration of the various suggestions made (in the regional meetings and small groups as well as within the Committee - Asia, Europe, the Middle East), the PR Committee recommended

that at the next Central Committee meeting there be a plenary on Asia, exploring among other issues the economic dimension, and providing delegates from other regions opportunity to consider the significance, for their own church and context, of the issues raised.

Dr Tsetsis welcomed the idea of regional plenaries, but felt that the focus at the next meeting of Central Committee should be on Central and Eastern Europe, postponing Asia until 2002. He was convinced that the churches in this region believed that the Council had not given them sufficient attention after the collapse of communism. He therefore moved that:

At the next Central Committee meeting, there be a plenary on Central and Eastern Europe, exploring the implications on world-wide level of the socio-economic changes in Central and Eastern Europe, their impact on the life of the churches in this region, as well as their repercussions for the ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches.

This amendment was seconded.

Responding to a question, the General Secretary explained that, when the Executive began to consider the idea of focusing on a specific region, the plan was to cover all the regions in the period up to the Ninth Assembly. This required some advance planning to ensure that each region had its turn. Dr Abuom referred to the PRC's discussion about a possible plenary on the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and its proposal to leave the final decision to the Executive.

Ms Hirata pointed out that there had been no plenary focus on Asia in the whole period between Canberra and Harare and urged that the original proposal to focus on Asia at the next Central Committee meeting be accepted. Ms Karagdag pointed out Asia should be looked at very seriously; other regions could learn from the Asian experience of globalisation, and the whole issue of overcoming violence.

The General Secretary felt that, in light of this discussion, it would be appropriate to leave the final decision to the Executive.

It was decided to recommend

that the Executive Committee give serious attention to the possibility of a plenary either on Asia or on Central and Eastern Europe in the framework of the next Central Committee meeting in January 2001, bearing in mind the discussion that had taken place in this session of the Central Committee.

Dr Granberg-Michaelson hoped that in addition to economic and social analysis of the region concerned, an ecclesiological and ecumenical analysis would be included, as well as information about concrete struggles and engagement of the churches and their ecumenical endeavours. It would have been helpful to learn more about the work of the ecumenical instruments in Africa.

On the particular issue of children in situations of armed conflict, following the address to Central Committee by Mr Olara Otunnu, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative, and the UN Security Council resolution of 25 August, a draft statement, prepared by the Africa regional meeting, was passed to the Public Issues Committee.

V. Regional Reports

In receiving reports from the regional meetings, the PR Committee noted and endorsed a wide range of areas of work and concerns (for instance, regarding spirituality, identity, globalisation, inter-religious dialogue, issues relating to environmental sustainability and indigenous cultures) relating to existing WCC programmes, in which it was hoped that the WCC would continue to encourage and collaborate with regional projects and initiatives. The following were identified as "emerging issues" on which the PR Committee recommended

that further consideration be given by staff and subsequent meetings of WCC governing bodies to:

- a) issues of ethnicity, identity, territory and church including the relation between religion and ethnic conflicts, the political and economic effect of the emergence of forms of misused religion, racism and xenophobia;
- b) the implications of the legacy of colonialism and of the Cold War for the process of reconciliation;
- c) the mobilisation of youth in the pursuit of spiritual renewal and Christian unity;

- d) the organising, in consultation with member churches, partners and REOs, of an international consultation for peace and security in North-East Asia;
- e) the creation of a framework to enable the WCC to take up the specific offer from South Africa in relation to truth and reconciliation;
- f) the review of mission policies where they have disruptive or even violent potential in the local context;
- g) concerns for disappearing languages of Indigenous Peoples.

Mr Grounds commented on the fact that indigenous languages were increasingly dying out because many of them were no longer taught to children. Such languages were irreplaceable and their loss was a real but still largely hidden issue for Indigenous Peoples. His point was taken up in item g) above.

The Central Committee agreed to the above recommendations.

VI. Decade to Overcome Violence:

Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace

The PR Committee had worked on a revised draft of the Message to be sent to member churches and others relating to the Decade to Overcome Violence. This together with a covering letter and Basic Framework document can be found in Appendix VI of these minutes.

During discussion of the Padare sessions, the Africa plenary and Regional meetings, a number of issues were identified as requiring attention in the context of the Decade to Overcome Violence, including the intrusion of international militarisation, small arms proliferation, conflict resolution and peace-building, the linkages between the Decade to Overcome Violence and religious and ethnic conflict.

In discussion, Dr Welsh expressed appreciation for the revised title, and urged that the abbreviation to initials be avoided in future, as this reduced the impact and challenge of the full title.

Differing opinions were expressed regarding the text of the Message - some affirmed it while others felt it was too ecclesiastical in tone and would not be helpful to those in local congregations.

The Central Committee voted in favour of the revised title - that it be the title of the Decade as a whole, not just of the Message:

The Decade to Overcome Violence Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace

It further agreed to the substance of the text of the Message.

VII. Issues relating to Process, Staffing, etc.

The PR Committee recommended, and the Central Committee agreed, that the following matters be taken into account in planning future Central Committee meetings and the process within Central Committee meetings, and in developing the CUV process:

- a) the dominant methodology, with its emphasis on the consideration of papers often presented at short notice and couched in fairly complicated language, was weighted against those more familiar with other ways of working;
- b) further work should be done on issues of communication, for example, in strengthening links between the WCC and REOs and enhancing links among the regions;
- c) the development of a sense of mutual accountability within Central Committee meetings, involving both support and challenge, was to be welcomed; but further attention should be given to the development of a consistent process whereby issues emerging from the regional meetings could be identified and discussed;
- d) considerable sensitivity was needed in planning the process for the conduct of meetings, even in relation, for example, to seating arrangements, and to securing participation by all Committee members;
- e) there was concern that certain regions (e.g. Asia, Caribbean) were underrepresented within the current staffing structure: it was important that the aspirations and perspectives of all regions be reflected in staff appointments and that in the development and prioritising of work through the CUV framework careful consideration be given to the most appropriate methodology (whether within the WCC itself, at REO level or through a process of collaboration).

Dr Hamm was appreciative of this attempt to improve the processes and procedures employed in Central Committee meetings. He had not found the plenary process in the first days of the meeting very helpful: members had addressed documents but had not really spoken to one another. The result was therefore simply a list of unrelated comments.

He affirmed the small groups which provided opportunity for those who did not find it easy to speak in plenary to be heard. But perhaps an agenda for these would be helpful in developing the kind of consensus of ideas and concerns regarding key themes and issues of Central Committee that were not facilitated by plenary sessions. Further, he asked that those planning future meetings of Central Committee seek ways to better integrate our Christian spirituality into our business sessions.

Ms Inamar de Souza, stressing the importance of spiritual renewal, suggested that a space be given within worship for exchange. She felt there should be more participation from member churches in the worship during Central Committees in order to share different spiritualities with each other. She was also concerned that no celebration of Holy Communion was foreseen within the programme.

The Central Committee received the report of Policy Reference Committee II with appreciation.

EVALUATION OF THIS MEETING

Dr Marion Best invited members of Central Committee to comment on their experiences of this meeting in order to help those planning future meetings.

The majority of remarks were positive, many saying that this meeting had been particularly helpful and they felt that discussion had been open and frank. There seemed to be a greater freedom and signs that a new era was developing perhaps as the result of the new structure. The Padare sessions and small group sessions had facilitated the process of getting to know each other.

With regard to plenary sessions, it was suggested that a way be sought to ensure that a debate had an organic quality rather than a series of set-piece speeches.

The system of requesting to speak meant that there was a lack of spontaneity and a response to a particular point might come only after several other speeches which were probably on different subjects. The fact that discussion had taken place in some of the later sessions on the basis of raising hands had worked quite well and enabled a better flow of debate. More visual aids might be used in presenting reports.

In order to ensure more responsible decision-making, more time was requested to look at reports from Committees before being required to express views or vote. This would mean some re-ordering of the programme to bring the Committee work forward.

In view of the work of the Special Commission and the concern about relationships between the churches - especially between Orthodox and Protestant churches - it was suggested that a meeting of Central Committee in a predominantly Orthodox country would be helpful to many members who otherwise had little opportunity for direct contact with Orthodox Churches.

The Advisers representing Disabled People had appreciated this meeting because they felt their concerns had been heard and responded to. They looked forward to continuing such cooperation.

Reference was made to the stewards' programme whose seminar had taken place sitting at round tables. It was helpful to be able to see the person who was speaking. Was there any way of organising the seating so that people could face each other?

Some felt that the worship had been less dynamic than in the past; this was not necessarily a criticism - just noting that it was different.

Concluding the discussion, the Moderator said that each meeting of Central Committee had its own character, its strengths and weaknesses. A new wind was blowing and freshness and vitality were emerging. There was a growing awareness of the importance of transparency, resulting in a real attempt to listen as well as to speak to one another. There had been a real effort to have less programme and more relationships, less procedures and more fellowship. This Central Committee should become an example of what it means to be part of a fellowship - a widening, deepening and enriching fellowship.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

(revised)

The General Secretary referred to the fact that there had been no gap between the end of committee work and the reports to plenary. In order to allow for more space, a revised schedule of dates was being proposed. This was **approved** as follows:

2000 (unchanged))
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Executive Committee 29 February - 3 March Executive Committee 26 - 29 September

2001

Executive Committee 26 - 27 January
Central Committee 29 January - 6 February
Executive Committee 11 - 14 September

2002

Executive Committee 19 - 22 February
Executive Committee 23 - 24 August
Central Committee 26 August - 3 September

2003

Executive Committee 18 - 21 February
Executive Committee 22 - 23 August
Central Committee 25 August - 2 September

2004

Executive Committee 17 - 20 February
Executive Committee 20 - 21 August
Central Committee 23 - 31 August

2005

Executive Committee 15 - 18 February

CLOSING ACTIONS

Prior to closing the meeting, the Moderator on behalf of the Officers expressed thanks and appreciation to:

- -- members of the Central Committee for their active participation and commitment to the deliberations and actions of the meeting;
- -- all those who had attended the meeting in various capacities for their participation;
- -- the Vice-Moderators for moderating some of the plenary sessions, and those who moderated deliberative sessions;
- -- the moderators, vice-moderators, and those who served on Committees, in the Padares and the small groups;
- -- Konrad Raiser for his leadership and commitment to the ecumenical movement and the Council;
- -- to the Deputy General Secretary, Georges Lemopoulos, and the Assistant to the General Secretary, Jeanne Becher, for their help in preparations for this meeting of the Central Committee.

The Moderator went on to express appreciation to Rev. Myra Blyth, who would be leaving the World Council in October to return to England. He had known her since the 1980s - first, as secretary of the Europe Desk, then as director of Unit IV. She had played a significant role in the promotion of ecumenical values and the ecumenical cause in different parts of the world, and participated actively in the life and witness of the Council. He hoped that the Central Committee would associate itself with his remarks so that their thanks and appreciation to Ms Blyth could be recorded in the minutes.

The General Secretary then expressed his gratitude to all those who had contributed to the success of this meeting of Central Committee, including:

- Myra Blyth and Terry MacArthur for planning the worship
- Conference Secretary Gerard Scarff
- Renate Sbeghen for organising the parish visits of 29 August
- the team of stewards under the staff leadership of Maria Koutazi and Freddy Knutsen
- the interpreters and translators, coordinated by Joan Reilly and Beth Godfrey

- Andrée and Lino d'Alessandri and Robert Equey for the interpretation equipment
- Gilbert Cudré-Mauroux for recordings
- Yvette Milosevic and Ute Matthey, responsible for the documents office
- the typing pool, under the leadership of Judith Kocher and Regina Rüeger Surur
- Administrative staff in the general secretariat: Brigitte Constant, Gudrun Smith,

Ursula Zierl and Wendy Goldsworthy

- Coordination with the cafeteria: Elisabeth Pigni and Mariette Grange
- Mr. Gonçalues and his kitchen staff
- the staff of the telephone/telex/telefax office under the leadership of Marie-Christine Gendre
- Yasmina Lebouachera and the cash office staff
- Denise von Arx and the information desk team
- Rözmi Pahlisch of the WCC bookshop
- Luzia Wehrle for first-aid assistance
- Peter Williams, photographer, and Gaby Vuagniaux, responsible for photo distribution
- Bob Scott, plenary hall manager
- Technical staff coordinated by Anne-Lyse Nabaffa and José Mendez
- Minute writer Rosemary Green
- Travel arrangements: the Raptim staff
- David Pozzi-Jonson and Catherine Inoubli for computer services.

The Moderator closed this meeting of the Central Committee at 15.40 hrs on Friday 3 September 1999.

Closing Worship took place in the Chapel of the Ecumenical Centre. The sermon was preached by Rev. Septemmy Lakawa, of the Protestant Church in South-East Sulawesi.

PARTICIPANTS

PRESIDIUM

Presidents

Dr Agnes ABUOM, Church of the Province of Kenya (Anglican)

Rev. Kathryn BANNISTER, United Methodist Church, USA

Rt Rev. Jabez BRYCE, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

Dr KANG, Moon-Kyu, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea

Bishop Federico PAGURA, Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina

Bishop Eberhardt RENZ, Evangelical Church in Germany

His Holiness Ignatius ZAKKA Iwas, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East

OFFICERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Moderator

His Holiness ARAM I, Catholicos of Cilicia, Armenian Apostolic Church (Cilicia), Lebanon

Vice-Moderators

Ms Justice Sophia O. A. ADINYIRA, Church of the Province of West Africa (Anglican), Ghana

Dr Marion S. BEST, United Church of Canada

General Secretary

Rev. Dr Konrad RAISER, Evangelical Church in Germany

MEMBERS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Mrs Inger Linnéa AASA MARKLUND, Church of Sweden Ms Martha G. AISI, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea Rev. Levi Okang'a AKHURA, African Church of the Holy Spirit, Kenya * Rev. Dr Hilarion ALFEYEV, Russian Orthodox Church Metropolitan AMBROSIUS of Oulu, Orthodox Church of Finland

H.B. Archbishop ANASTASIOS of Tirana, Durres and All Albania, Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania

Mme Akissi J. ANEYE, Eglise protestante méthodiste de Côte d'Ivoire

Ms Keshini I. ARULENDRAN, Church of Ceylon, Sri Lanka

Metropolitan ATHANASIOS of Heliopolis and Theira, Ecumenical Patriarchate

Mr Victor AVASI, Church of the Province of Uganda (Anglican)

Bishop Samuel AZARIAH, Church of Pakistan

Mlle Louise BAKALA KOUMOUNO, Eglise évangélique du Congo, Brazzaville

Rev. Dr Trond BAKKEVIG, Church of Norway

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Frau Heike BOSIEN, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, Germany

Rev. Ruth BOTTOMS, Baptist Union of Great Britain, England

Rev. Avedis BOYNERIAN, Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East

Rev. José Domingo CAETANO, Missao Evangélica Pentecostal de Angola

Mrs Selai CATI, Kiribati Protestant Church, Republic of Kiribati, Pacific

Rev. Dr Simao CHAMANGO, Igreja Presbiteriana de Moçambique

Dr Pamela CHINNIS, Episcopal Church, USA

Bishop Farai J. CHIRISA, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe

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* Rev. Inamar CORREA DE SOUZA, Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil

* Rev. Yadessa DABA, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

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* Rev. Anders GADEGAARD, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark

Rev. GAO, Ying, China Christian Council

* Rev. Dr Kondothra M. GEORGE, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, India

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Lic. Gerald GREEN, Iglesia Morava en Nicaragua

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Mr Wilhelm JAP-A-JOE, Moravian Church in Suriname

Rev. Prof. Aurel JIVI, Romanian Orthodox Church

Rev. Dr Margot KAESSMANN, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland

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H.G. Archbishop Abuna KERLOS, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

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Rev. Hector MENDEZ, Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba

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Mrs Pragyan MOHANTY, Church of North India

Mr Naboth M. MUCHOPA, Methodist Church, UK

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Rev. Dr Staccato POWELL, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, USA

Ms Despina PRASSAS, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, USA

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Mr Leonardo D. RATUWALANGON, Kalimantan Evangelical Church, Indonesia

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Rev. John H. ROBERTS, Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Rt Rev. Barry ROGERSON, Church of England

Mme Jeanine Colette ROGIER, Eglise protestante unie de Belgique

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Mr Georgy ROSCHIN, Russian Orthodox Church

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Mr Albert A.K. SAMADDER, Church of Bangladesh

Bishop Telmor SARTISON, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Rev. Dr Robert E. SAWYER, Moravian Church in America (Southern Province)

Ms Ashley SEAMAN, Presbyterian Church, USA

Bishop SERAPION, Coptic Orthodox Church, Egypt/USA

Rev. Nathan SETIABUDI, Indonesian Christian Church

Rev. Norman SHANKS, Church of Scotland

Rev. Dr Hermen P. SHASTRI, Methodist Church in Malaysia

Rev. Pawel STEFANOWSKI, Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Poland

Bishop Michael Kehine STEPHEN, Methodist Church Nigeria

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Mrs Woraporn THARAWANICH, Church of Christ in Thailand

* Bishop Dr Zacharias Mar THEOPHILUS, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, India/USA

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Mrs Madeleine TIKI-KOUM, Eglise évangélique du Cameroun

Metropolitan Makarios TILLYRIDES of Zimbabwe, Greek Orthodox

Patriarchate of Alexandria, Zimbabwe

H.E. Metropolitan TIMOTHEOS of Corfu, Church of Greece

Rev. Steve TITUS, United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, Namibia

Most Rev. Christ Saban Royan TOPNO, United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India

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* Very Rev. Dr Georges TSETSIS, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Switzerland

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H.G. Bishop Anba YOUANNES, Coptic Orthodox Church, Egypt

* Bishop McKinley YOUNG, African Methodist Episcopal Church, USA

H.G. Bishop Abou Georges ZAKHM, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, Syria

Rev. Melake Tabor T. ZERIHUN, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

SUBSTITUTES

Mr Carlos Aguayo Romero Pentecostal Church of Chile for Pastor Luis Munoz Moraga

Mr Andrei Dan Apostu

for Ms Iveta Starcova

Orthodox Church in Czech Lands and Slovakia

Bishop Simeon of Maranska Lazne

for Very Rev. Dr Krystof

Orthodox Church in Czech Lands and Slovakia

Ms Melinda Mounsmie-Oosman for Archbishop Rémi J. Rabinirina

Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean

Mr Gaby Habib for Fr Leonid Kishkovsky

Orthodox Church in America (30 August - 3 September)

^{*} Member of the Executive Committee

Bishop Rolf Koppe for Rev. Dr Margot Kaessmann Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (30 August - 3 September)

Rev. Robert Welsh
Disciples of Christ, USA (2-3 September)
for Dr Bernice Jackson
UCC/USA

OKR Tim Kuschnerus for Bishop Wolfgang Huber Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2-3 September)

Mr Stig Utnam for Canon Trond Bakkevig Church of Norway (3 September)

Rev. André Spivey for Bishop McKinley Young African Methodist Episcopal Church, USA (3 September).

DELEGATED REPRESENTATIVES OF MEMBER CHURCHES NOT OTHERWISE REPRESENTED

Rev. Anna Ljung Hansson

Rev. Dr Yo-Han Lee

Rev. Dr Judy Mills Reimer

Mission Covenant Church of Sweden

Korean Methodist Church

Church of the Brethren, USA

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Roman Catholic Church
(Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity)

Msgr John Mutiso Mbinda
Roman Catholic Church
(Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity)

GUEST

Rev. Dr Emilio Castro Evangelical Methodist Church, Uruguay

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Rev. Dr Keith Clements

Rev. Gaspar Domingos

Rev. David Gill

Mr David Goodbourn

Rev. Plezzant Harris

Rev. Canon Clement Janda

Rev. Dr Riad Jarjour

Mr Ipe Joseph

Rev. Grace Kaiso

Rev. Holger Lam

Mr Densen Mafinyani

Rev. Dr Joseph Pattiasina

Pasteur Alain Rey

Rev. Tombe Stephen

Bishop Roman Tiples

Council of Churches in the Netherlands

Conference of European Churches

Council of Christian Churches in Angola

National Council of Churches in Australia

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Liberia Council of Churches

All Africa Conference of Churches

Middle East Council of Churches

National Council of Churches in India

Uganda Joint Christian Council

Ecumenical Council of Denmark

Zimbabwe Council of Churches

Communion of Churches in Indonesia

C.E.V.A.A.

Sudan Council of Churches

National Council of Churches in the

Philippines

Rev. Bärbel Wartenberg-Potter Council of C

Council of Churches in Germany

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Dr Ishmael Noko

Rev. John C. Moyer

World Vision International

General Conference of Seventh-Day

Adventists

Nordic Ecumenical Council

Friends World Committee for Consultation

Int.Fed. Of the Action of Christians for the

Abolition of Torture (FIACAT)

Council for World Mission

World YWCA

Lutheran World Federation

Frontier Internship in Mission

Rev. Milan Opocensky Rev. Dr Cecil Robeck, Jr.

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Mr Gert van Maanen

Mrs A. Van Melle-Hermans

Deaconess Louise Williams

Mr Ralph Young

World Alliance of Reformed Churches

Pentecostals (Assemblies of God)

Salvation Army

Christian Council of Sweden

Oikocredit

Christian Peace Conference

Diakonia World Federation

World Methodist Council

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YOUTH ADVISERS

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By-Laws Commission of the Churches on International Affairs

1. Name and Organization

- 1.1 The Commission shall be called the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.
- 1.2 The Commission is an agency of the World Council of Churches, responsible to the Central Committee through its Programme Committee.

2. Aims

- 2.1 It shall be the task of the Commission to witness to the Lordship of Christ over human beings and history by serving people in the field of international relations and promoting reconciliation and oneness of human beings by creation; to God's gracious and redemptive action in history; and to the assurance of the coming kingdom of God in Jesus Christ. This service is demanded by the continuing ministry of Christ in the world of priestly intercession, prophetic judgement, the arousing of hope and conscience and pastoral care. This task necessitates engagement in immediate and concrete issues as well as the formulation of general Christian aims and purposes.
- In seeking to fulfil this task the Commission shall serve the Council, the member churches, the national and regional ecumenical organisations and Christian world communions with which the Council is related and such other international Christian bodies as may be agreed by the Council, as a source of information and guidance in their approach to international problems, as a medium of counsel and action and as an organ in formulating the Christian mind on world issues and bringing that mind effectively to bear upon such issues.
- 2.3 The Commission will call the attention of churches and councils to problems which are especially claimant upon the Christian conscience at any particular time and to suggest ways in which Christians may act effectively upon those problems in their respective countries and internationally and to respond to issues raised by churches and national

- and regional ecumenical organisations.
- Special relations may be negotiated from time to time by the Council with the Christian world communions, other international Christian bodies and with regional and national councils of churches and the Commission shall assist them in their approach to international affairs and be assisted by them.
- 2.5 The Commission shall encourage:
 - a) the promotion of peace with justice and freedom;
 - b) the development of international law and of effective international institutions;
 - c) the respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, special attention being given to the problem of religious liberty;
 - d) the promotion of the rights and welfare of refugees, migrants and internally displaced people;
 - e) efforts for disarmament;
 - f) the furtherance of economic and social justice;
 - g) acceptance by all nations of the obligation to promote to the utmost the welfare of all peoples and the development of free political institutions;
 - h) the promotion of the right of self-determination of peoples under alien or colonial domination;
 - i) the international promotion of social, cultural, educational and humanitarian enterprises.

3. Functions

- 3.1 To initiate and carry out appropriate actions for the furtherance of the aims.
- 3.2 To advise and assist in the formulation of the Council's policies on international affairs.
- 3.3 To assist churches and national and regional ecumenical organisations in the formulation of their policies on international affairs and to consult them.
- 3.4 To share with the churches information and analysis on critical political issues as part of the educational task.
- 3.5 To monitor national and international political developments and to analyze and interpret them, especially as they affect the life and witness of the churches.

- 3.6 To arrange for or promote research on selected problems of international justice, world order and peace and to utilise the results in the furtherance of the work of the Commission.
- 3.7 To support the efforts of the churches and related groups in their activities in conformity with the aims of the Commission.
- 3.8 To follow up and support at the international level initiatives taken by churches and ecumenical organisations in the areas of concern of the Commission.
- To be a forum for exchange of information and experience among churches and groups in international affairs, especially related to conflict resolution and the promotion of peace and human rights, including the rights of uprooted people.
- 3.10 To make representations to governments in accordance with the policies of the Council in matters of concern to the Council or to any of its member churches.
- 3.11 To develop relationships in study and action with non-member churches and organisations, including those of other faiths, sharing aims similar to those of the Commission.
- 3.12 To maintain and provide for the maintenance of contacts with international bodies such as the United Nations and its agencies, including regional bodies and other non-governmental organizations, which will assist in the attainment of the aims of the Commission.
- 3.13 To represent the Council or to provide for its representation and the coordination thereof before these international bodies, as may be specifically arranged. The Commission may also represent, facilitate and help coordinate the representation of member churches, related international Christian organisations and non-member churches before such international bodies.

4. Membership, Officers and Staff of the Commission

- 4.1 The Commission shall be appointed by the Central Committee and shall hold office until the next Assembly.
- 4.2 The Officers of the Commission shall be the Moderator, who shall be elected by the Central Committee, a Vice-Moderator, who shall be elected by the Commission, and, ex officio, the Coordinator, who for the purpose of the external relations of the Council may use the title Director of the

Commission.

- 4.3 Christian knowledge and commitment and technical competence in international affairs and related subjects shall be the chief qualifications sought in all members. There will be an emphasis on laymen and lay women as members of the Commission and a proper balance of the membership in respect of geography, age, race, culture and confession shall be sought.
- 4.4 The tasks of a Commissioner shall be:
 - a) to attend meetings of the Commission and to participate in its work;
 - b) to correspond with the Officers, drawing their attention to matters which in his or her view should occupy their attention, and to advise them in pursuit of such matters,
 - c) to cooperate with recognised councils and church agencies and committees in educating public opinion.
- 4.5 The staff assigned by the Council to work on international relations will be appointed and employed according to the normal procedures of the Council, in consultation with the Moderator and Vice-Moderator with respect to the appointment of executive staff.

5. Panels or Advisory Groups

The Commission may appoint panels or advisory groups on particular aspects of its work in pursuance of its aims and the performance of its functions.

6. Meetings of the Commission

- The Commission shall normally meet every eighteen months at a place and time determined by the Coordinator in consultation with the Moderator.
- Any eight members of the Commission or the General Secretary of the Council may require a meeting to be convened for any purpose within the aims of the Commission and the Moderator shall forthwith convene a meeting giving due notice of its purpose.
- In the case of members who give sufficient notice that they are unable to attend a meeting of the Commission, the Moderator and Coordinator may invite a substitute, who shall have the right to speak and to vote.
- 6.4 Consultants may be invited by the Moderator and Coordinator to attend

- meetings of the Commission based on their having special competence on major matters under consideration. They shall have the right to speak, but not to vote.
- 6.5 The quorum for meetings of the Commission shall be one third of the members.
- The Commission shall determine the general policies to be followed by the Moderator, Vice-Moderator and staff in fulfilment of its aims. The Commission may also approve statements proposed for general publication in the name of the Commission, subject to the relevant rules of the Council.

7. Finance

- 7.1 The staff shall prepare a budget for the activities of the Commission, to be submitted as part of the unified programme budget to the Finance Committee and the Central Committee.
- 7.2 The Commission will receive reports on the budget and funding of the work and will provide oversight of the detailed planning and policy in relation to the funding of programmatic activities and projects relating to its work within the overall policies and budget approved by the Central Committee.
- 7.3 The Commission should assist in developing the financial resources available for the work of international relations (affairs).

8. Contacts with Governments and Intergovernmental Bodies

8.1 General principles

- a) The Commission may negotiate directly in its own name and in the name of the Council with the United Nations and other international bodies in conformity with the policies of the Council
- b) In making representation to national governments or other national entities to advance a Christian view on any problem in accordance with its aims, the Commission shall do so ordinarily in consultation with member churches, national councils and the Commission members in the country or countries. However, in exceptional circumstances the *Commission* may make such representations without such consultation and even when national or regional bodies do not concur.

8.2 Representations:

- a) the Commission, when meeting, may propose representations in keeping with Council policy;
- b) the Moderator and Vice-Moderator, in their official capacities, may make such proposals, provided that it is also in agreement with the decisions of the Commission and after consultation with the General Secretary of the Council and the Moderator of the Central Committee and with their concurrence;
- c) a member of the Commission may not act in the name of the Commission unless specific authorization has been given;
- d) the Commission may, in addition, prepare and recommend statements through the appropriate channels to the governing bodies of the Council for their consideration and to any appropriate assemblies or conferences meeting under the auspices of the Council and to such bodies with which relationships have been agreed under the provisions of by-law 2.4.
- 8.3 Procedures for contact with the United Nations:
 - a) In accordance with the arrangements provided by the United Nations and its specialised agencies, the staff in consultation with the General Secretary of the Council are empowered to seek and maintain consultative status with the United Nations, its specialised agencies and other intergovernmental bodies on behalf of the Council.
 - b) Such contacts with other organs and specialised agencies may be necessary to accomplish the Commission's aims and the programmes of the Council;
 - c) The Commission shall, with the approval of the General Secretary of the Council, be responsible for facilitating and arranging such direct contact with organs and specialised agencies of the United Nations as may be requested by other programme staff of the Council and by bodies with which special relations have been agreed under the provisions of by-law 2.4.

9. Amendments to the By-Laws

- 9.1 These by-laws may be amended by the Central Committee on the recommendation of, or in consultation with the Commission.
- 9.2 Three months' notice shall be given to members of the Commission in respect of any proposal to consider an amendment to the by-laws at a meeting of the Commission.

By-Laws Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation

1. Purpose

The Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation (the Commission) is advisory to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches through the Programme Committee.

2. Aims and Functions

- 2.1 Education and Ecumenical Formation represents a significant historical strand of the ecumenical movement. It remains at the heart of the concerns of churches, congregations, councils, movements and individuals. It enables member churches and others to participate in the ecumenical vocation and imperative. Education is a means by which people and churches learn to be and to act.
- 2.2 The Commission shall, therefore, in collaboration with churches and networks:
- 2.2.1 foster the understanding and practice of ecumenical learning;
- 2.2.2 support the churches' educational ministry within the Christian community and the world, including that of equipping people in the practice of personal discipleship and mission, developing lay leadership, the theological education of all in the local congregation and promoting human resource development;
- 2.2.3 promote ecumenical theological education and ministerial formation;
- 2.2.4 enable families, congregations and church related institutions to be inclusive learning communities;
- 2.2.5 reflect on and respond to emerging educational needs and developments.
- 2.3 The Commission shall initiate and carry out appropriate actions for the furtherance of these aims within the framework of the policies set by the Central Committee.

3. Membership, Officers and Staff of the Commission

3.1 The Commission shall be composed of no more than 30 members appointed by the Central Committee. They shall be appointed after each

- Assembly and shall hold office until the following Assembly.
- 3.2 The Officers of the Commission shall be the Moderator, who shall be elected by Central Committee, a Vice-Moderator who shall be elected by the Commission and, ex-officio, the coordinator of the staff team on Education and Ecumenical Formation.
- As well as being broadly representative of the membership of the Council in respect of region, culture and confession, members should be appointed for their relevant experience and knowledge of education and ecumenical formation. At least 10 members should be representative of networks associated with education and ecumenical formation, specifically including Ecumenical Theological Education and OIKOSNET or any successor bodies.
- The Roman Catholic Church, and any other body determined by the Commission, shall be invited to send consultants to the meetings of the Commission. Such consultants shall be entitled to full participation in the work of the Commission except that they shall not be entitled to vote.
- 3.5 The Commission shall meet normally every 18 months.
- The staff of the Commission shall be the members of the team on Education and Ecumenical Formation as assigned by the General Secretary. Staff shall report to the Commission but are accountable to the General Secretary on behalf of the Executive and Central Committees.

4. Working Groups

The Commission may appoint ad hoc or standing working groups on particular aspects of its work in pursuance of its aims. Such working groups shall be given a mandate by the Commission which sets out their objectives together with their responsibilities for action and accountability.

5. Finance

- 5.1 The budget for the activities of the Commission shall be prepared and submitted to the Finance Committee as part of the unified budget of the Council.
- Within the overall budget and policies agreed by the Central Committee, the Commission will oversee the funding and costs of activities and projects.

5.3 The Commission shall assist in developing financial resources for the work of education and ecumenical formation.

6. Meetings

- 6.1 The time and location of the meeting shall be determined by the Officers.
- 6.2 If a member gives sufficient notice of being unable to attend a meeting of the Commission, the Officers may invite a substitute who shall have the right to speak and vote.
- Persons having special competence on major matters under discussion may be invited by the Officers to attend a meeting of the Commission, having the right to speak but not to vote.
- 6.4 The quorum for a meeting of the Commission shall be one third of the members.

7. Amendments to the By-Laws

These by-laws may be amended by the Central Committee in consultation with or on the recommendation of the Commission.

Introduction to the CWME By-laws

In 1961, the International Missionary Council (IMC) merged with the World Council of Churches on the understanding that concerns for mission and evangelism would have a structured place at the heart of the WCC. This finds expression in the Conference and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), which have had their own constitution since 1961 and which figure in the current By-laws of the WCC. Former member councils of the IMC had become - for those who accepted it - affiliated bodies of CWME.

Following the most recent structural change of the WCC, there is a need to adapt the existing CWME Constitution which was adopted by the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism of San Antonio 1989 and, subsequently, by the WCC Central Committee. At its meeting in Salvador de Bahía in 1996, the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism received a report on the ongoing process of structural change within the WCC and decided to provide for a mechanism that would allow for its own constitutional changes once the new WCC structure would be in place.

The Salvador Conference took the following decisions:

- 1. It requested the Central Committee to
- set up a Commission on World Mission and Evangelism which would carry forward the concerns for mission and evangelism, health and healing, and community and justice, and provide for future meetings of the Conference itself;
- ensure that the Commission would have a substantial representation of the CWME affiliated bodies as well as appropriate persons drawn from beyond the present constituency of the WCC and CWME;
- have staff in the WCC assigned specifically to tasks of mission and evangelism.
- 2. It authorized the future Commission "to amend the Constitution and by-laws governing CWME according to the new structure of the WCC, provided that notice of amendments be sent to the affiliated bodies not less than six months prior to their consideration by the Commission."

3. It appointed a consultative group to assist and accompany the implementation of the above resolutions.

A draft text of By-laws was prepared by the Unit II Executive Group after the Salvador Conference. It was presented to and received by the Central Committee in September 1997 which body also accepted the principle of such a Commission (cf. minutes of CC 1997, p. 101-103). Following this, the By-laws were revised by the "consultative group" appointed by the Salvador conference.

One year later, the **Executive Committee** of the WCC, meeting in September 1998, gave provisional approval to the revised CWME By-laws so as to allow for the preparations of nominations after the Harare assembly. The Executive Committee was aware that the "consultative group" appointed by Salvador would meet early in 1999 to receive comments from the CWME affiliated bodies and prepare a final text for the new Central Committee (minutes of EC September 98, p. 39-40).

The "consultative group" met at the end of February 1999 to prepare a final text of the By-laws which was circulated to all CWME affiliated bodies six months in advance of the CC meeting of this year. No objections have been received.

This final text of the CWME By-laws is now presented to Central Committee for approval.

To comply with its "constitutional" aspect for CWME, the text also needs approval by the future CWME commission which has been authorized by the Conference to take such an action.

Commission on World Mission and Evangelism and Conference on World Mission and Evangelism By-Laws

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Meanings
- 3. The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
- 4. The Conference on World Mission and Evangelism
- 5. Amendments

1. Introduction

In 1961, the International Missionary Council (IMC) – which traces its history to the Edinburgh conference of 1910 – was merged with the World Council of Churches on the understanding that concerns for mission and evangelism would have a structured place at the heart of the WCC. This finds expression in the Conference and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.

- 2. Meanings in these by-laws:
- 2.1 **The Conference** means the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism.
- The Commission means the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.
- The Officers shall be the Moderator, the Vice-Moderator and the Coordinator of the Commission and a representative of the Mission and Evangelism Team.
- The Staff means the staff members of the WCC assigned to work on world mission and evangelism.

3. The Commission

3.1 Aim

In continuity with the functions formerly carried out by the International Missionary Council and articulated in the Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC, the aims of the Commission are:

3.1.1 To carry out the aim of the Conference: "to assist the Christian

- community in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, by word and deed, to the whole world to the end that all may believe in him and be saved" (cf 4.1).
- 3.1.2 To facilitate the common witness of the churches in each place and in all places and to help them support each other in their local, national and worldwide work of mission and evangelism.

3.2 Specific Functions of the Commission

The specific functions of the Commission in collaboration with staff members assigned to the Mission and Evangelism Team, are:

- 3.2.1 To advise the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches through the Programme Committee on matters relating to mission and evangelism, including issues relating to health and healing, community and justice, and assist in the evaluation and review of programmes as appropriate.
- 3.2.2 To assist the churches and councils and other bodies in common exploration of the truth and content of the gospel in relation to culture and the manner of its public proclamation.
- 3.2.3 To promote biblical and theological studies on the nature of Christian witness, as demand arises from the life of the churches in their encounters with the contemporary world, and from the concerns of the various expressions of the ecumenical movement in mission.
- 3.2.4 To provoke the churches, mission agencies and other bodies to discern the opportunities and priorities for holistic mission, including issues relating to health and healing, community and justice, in various cultures and power structures, locally and worldwide.
- 3.2.5 To encourage common, unequivocal yet sensitive "witness in Christ's way" so as to promote the fellowship of the church in mission.
- 3.2.6 To promote mutual dialogue on mission understanding, practice and relationships with churches as well as with other bodies not presently related to the Conference.
- 3.2.7 To communicate the ongoing concerns of mission and evangelism through publications and other instruments such as the *International Review of Mission* and the World Wide Web.
- 3.2.8 To recommend to the Central Committee the holding of and to facilitate meetings of the Conference.
- 3.2.9 To seek the enlargement, where appropriate, of the circle of formal

- affiliation and informal association with the Conference.
- 3.2.10 To set up *ad hoc* task groups from time to time to address specific issues related to mission and evangelism, subject to availability of funds and the approval of the Programme Committee of the Central Committee.
- 3.2.11 To raise funds for specific work arising from the Conference, subject to the approval of the Central Committee.

3.3 Structure of the Commission

- 3.3.1 The Commission shall consist of not more than thirty persons appointed by the Central Committee. The outgoing Commission on World Mission and Evangelism shall submit nominations at the appropriate time, to the Central Committee, for membership of the Commission, according to the following categories:
 - a) the majority should be drawn from the member churches of the World Council of Churches;
 - b) about 25% should be chosen from those nominated by the Affiliated Bodies of the Conference;
 - c) the remaining members should be drawn from a wider constituency. In choosing members of the Commission consideration shall be given, *inter alia*, to proven ability and commitment to reflect on mission, and to confessional, gender and regional balances consistent with WCC policies.
- 3.3.2 Members of the Commission shall be appointed after each WCC Assembly and shall hold office until the following Assembly. They shall be eligible for a further term. If a member of the Commission ceases effectively to hold office during the term of his or her appointment, a replacement will be appointed by the Central Committee to serve until the next Assembly.
- 3.3.3 The Commission shall have a Moderator elected by the Central Committee and a Vice-Moderator elected by the Commission. The Moderator normally represents the Commission and the Conference on the WCC Programme Committee.
- 3.3.4 The Commission shall report to the Central Committee and shall work with staff of the WCC under the direction of the General Secretary.
- 3.3.5 The Commission shall keep the member churches and the affiliated bodies of the Conference informed of its work.

- 3.3.6 The Commission may appoint a small Executive Group to act on its behalf between meetings of the Commission. Such an Executive Group would include the Officers.
- 3.3.7 The Commission shall meet normally every 18 months.
- 3.3.8 The staff of the Commission shall be the members of the Mission and Evangelism Team as assigned by the General Secretary. Staff shall report to the Commission but are accountable to the General Secretary on behalf of the Executive and Central Committees.

3.3.9 Finance

- a) The budget for the activities of the Commission shall be prepared and submitted to the Finance Committee as part of the unified budget of the Council
- b) Within the overall budget and policies agreed by the Central Committee, the Commission will oversee the funding and costs of activities and projects.
- c) The Commission shall assist in developing financial resources for the work of mission and evangelism.

4. The Conference

4.1 Aim

The aim of the Conference is to assist the Christian community in the proclamaion of the gospel of Jesus Christ, by word and deed, to the whole world to the end that all may believe in him and be saved.

4.2 Governing Principles

- 4.2.1 The main task of the Conference is to provide opportunities for churches, mission agencies, groups and national and regional councils concerned with Christian mission to meet together for reflection and consultation leading to common witness.
- The Conference shall normally meet once between Assemblies. This Conference Meeting shall be convened by the Commission with the approval of the Central Committee. The Co-Moderators of this Conference Meeting shall be the Moderator and Vice-Moderators of the Commission together with a representative of the Mission and Evangelism Team.
- 4.2.3 The results of the Conference Meeting shall be communicated to the

constituency of the Conference by the Commission and shall also be reported to the Assembly and the Central Committee through the Commission.

4.2.4 Administrative and executive responsibilities of the Conference shall be carried out by the Commission and staff.

4.3 Membership of the Conference

- 4.3.1 Subject to the approval of the Central Committee the Commission shall determine the size, membership and programme of the World Conference, with due attention to regional, confessional, gender and age diversity within the overall norms set by the WCC. Due care will be taken to provide for substantial representation of WCC member churches and CWME Affiliated Bodies from names submitted by these member churches and bodies, along with a number of other persons involved at the frontiers of Christian mission.
- 4.3.2 The Commission shall take care to maintain an ongoing communication with member churches and members of the Conference following the Conference Meeting itself, in order that this body of people may assist in following-up decisions made by the Conference Meeting and may serve as interpreters of developments related to Conference follow-up.
- 4.3.3 Members of the Conference shall seek to promote in their councils and churches the aims and findings of the Conference Meeting and the work of the Mission and Evangelism Team. Members of the Conference shall draw to the attention of the Commission matters with which they feel it should be concerned. They shall seek to promote support, including financial support, for the work of the Mission and Evangelism Team.
- 4.3.4 Consultants and observers may be invited to meetings of the Conference. They shall have the right to speak, but not to vote.
- 4.3.5 Quorum of the Conference

One third of the members of the Conference shall constitute a quorum at any given session, provided that

a)among them there are members of the Conference from each continent, and

b)among the members present at least one third of the Affiliated Bodies represented.

4.4 Affiliation and Consultative Relations

- 4.4.1 National councils or regional conferences which accept the aim of the Conference may become affiliated to the Conference. All Councils affiliated to the CWME under the previous Constitution shall be regarded as affiliated to the Conference under these by-laws, unless they notify to the contrary.
- 4.4.2 Churches in countries where there is no affiliated national council may apply for affiliation to the Conference.
- 4.4.3 A group of churches organized for joint action for mission in a country where there is an affiliated national council or such an international or intercontinental group of churches, may also apply for affiliation.
- 4.4.4 Applications for affiliation shall be considered by the Commission. If the application is supported by a two-thirds majority of the Commission present and voting, this action shall be communicated to the affiliated members of the Conference and, unless objection is received from more than one third of them within six months, the applicant shall be declared affiliated. There shall be consultation with the member churches of the WCC in the area concerned, except in the case of councils already in association with the WCC.
- 4.4.5 National and regional Christian councils and churches and other groupings, may while not desiring affiliation request a consultative relation with the Conference. In such cases, those requesting such a consultative relationship must accept the aims of the Conference. Action on such requests shall be taken by the Commission. Councils and other groupings in consultative relation may send consultants to meetings of the Conference, who shall be entitled to speak but not vote.

5. Amendments

- 5.1 The Central Committee may make amendments on the recommendation of, or in consultation with, the Commission.
- 5.2 Amendments may be proposed by the Conference, the Affiliated Bodies of the Conference or the Commission.
- Notice of any proposed amendment must be sent to the Affiliated Bodies of the Conference not less than six months prior to its consideration by the Commission.
- The Commission may recommend a proposed amendment to the Central Committee unless one-third of the Affiliated Bodies of the Conference have indicated in writing prior to the Commission meeting that they oppose the amendment.

By-Laws Ecumenical Institute, Bossey

1. Status

The Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, located at the Château de Bossey, Céligny, Switzerland (hereafter called "the Institute"), is a specialised activity of the World Council of Churches located in the General Secretariat with a programmatic relationship to the team on Education and Ecumenical Formation.

2. Aim

It shall be the aim of the Institute to contribute to the education and formation of future generations of ecumenical leadership among both clergy and laity; to provide for ecumenical theological encounter in an inter-cultural and inter-confessional setting and to build a community in which ecumenical experience and different kinds of spirituality are being shared and ecumenical understanding nurtured.

3. Functions

In pursuing its aim the Institute shall:

- 3.1 Conduct a Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies;
- 3.2 Organise courses, consultations and seminars;
- 3.3 Co-operate with ecumenical partner institutions and centres in activities of ecumenical education and research;
- 3.4 Engage in extension work;
- 3.5 Sponsor an ecumenical venue and facilities for meetings and conferences.

4. Organisation

- 4.1 The Institute shall have a programme section and a guest house section, both serving the basic aim as stated in para 2 above.
- 4.2 The programme section comprises all programme activities which are sponsored or co-sponsored by the Institute, including in particular the Graduate School and the various courses and

consultations;

4.3 The guest house section comprises all activities related to the management of the Institute as a meeting centre and guest house.

5. Board

- 5.1 The activities of the Institute shall be governed by a Board, which shall be responsible to the Central Committee through the Programme Committee.
- The Board shall comprise not more than 15 members, including the Moderator. The Moderator and members of the Board shall be appointed by the Central Committee and shall serve until the next Assembly. The membership shall include one person nominated by the University of Geneva (see 7.2 below), the Deputy General Secretary and persons with experience in academic teaching, ecumenical education, lay training and institutional finance and administration.
- 5.3 The Board shall elect a Vice-Moderator from within its number.
- The Board shall be responsible for the work of the Institute within the framework of the Constitution and Rules of the Council. In particular it shall:
 - a) approve the annual programme of the Institute formulated by the Bossey faculty, including the theme and structure of the Graduate School and subjects for its courses, consultations and seminars;
 - b) advise the Director with regard to all aspects of the implementation of the aim and functions of the Institute;
 - c) receive the annual report of the Director;
 - d) review the business policy for the management of the Institute as a meeting centre and guest house;
 - e) receive reports on the budget and funding of the Institute;
 - f) assist in developing the financial resources available for the work of the Institute.
- The Board shall normally meet once a year. Meetings shall be called by the Moderator. A special meeting may be called if it is requested by at least 6 members or by the Executive Committee of the Council for specific reasons.

- The Officers of the Board shall be the Moderator, Vice-Moderator and the Deputy General Secretary. The Officers may act in consultation with the Director on behalf of the Board in urgent matters and on business referred to them by the Board. They must report their actions to the Board for approval.
- 5.7 The Board may also from time to time appoint sub-committees for specifically stated purposes.
- The Board shall report through the Programme Committee to each meeting of the Central Committee.

6. Director and Staff

- 6.1 The staff of the Institute shall be the members of the staff of the General Secretariat who are assigned to the work of the Institute.
- The staff will be appointed in accordance with the normal procedure for the appointment of World Council staff, but the General Secretary will consult with the Officers of the Board regarding the appointment of the Director. The executive staff of the Institute will be appointed by the General Secretary in consultation with the Director, and in accordance with the normal procedures.
- The Director shall have overall responsibility for the Institute. She/he reports to the Board and is responsible to the Deputy General Secretary.
- An Administrator may be appointed, on the recommendation of the Board, who will have responsibility for the operation of the guest house.

7. Partners

- 7.1 The Institute is related to the University of Geneva by a special agreement.
- 7.2 In pursuing its aims and functions the Institute may enter into agreements of partnership with academic institutions, ecumenical bodies and conference or educational centres. The Institute is represented in such agreements through the Council unless otherwise determined.

8. Finances

- 8.1 The Director will be responsible for working with the Director for Finance and Administration in preparing a budget for the activities of the Institute, which will then be submitted to the Finance Committee and the WCC Central Committee.
- 8.2 The Board will receive reports on the budget and funding of the work of the Institute and will provide oversight of planning within the overall policies and budget approved by the Central Committee.
- 8.3 The Board should assist in developing the financial resources available for the work of the Institute.

9. Amendments

These by-laws may be amended by the Central Committee on the recommendation of, or in consultation with the Board.

By-Laws Faith and Order (Cluster: Issues and Themes)

1. Meanings

- 1.1 Faith and Order means the Standing Commission and the Plenary Commission hereinafter defined.
- 1.2 The Standing Commission means the Standing Commission on Faith and Order of the Council.
- 1.3 The Plenary Commission means the Plenary Commission on Faith and Order of the Council.
- 1.4 The Officers means the Moderator and Vice-Moderators of the Standing Commission and the Plenary Commission, the Director of the Cluster: Issues and Themes and the Director of the Secretariat of Faith and Order.
- 1.5 The Secretariat means the Secretariat of Faith and Order.

2. Introduction

Faith and Order represents an historic, founding movement of the Council. There is a need for it to have a continuing, identifiable visibility and structure in order to maintain its ability to incorporate the participation of the Roman Catholic Church and other non-member churches of the Council in the organising and staffing of its activities within the overall framework of the Council.

3. Aim and Functions

- 3.1 The Aim of Faith and Order is to proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, in order that the world may believe.
- 3.2 The Functions of the Standing Commission and Plenary Commission are:
- (a) to study such questions of faith, order and worship as bear on this aim and to examine such social, cultural, political, racial and other factors as affect the unity of the Church;
- (b) to study the theological implications of the existence and development of

the ecumenical movement and to keep prominently before the Council the obligation to work towards unity;

- (c) to promote prayer for unity;
- (d) to study matters in the present relationship of the churches to one another which cause difficulties or which particularly require theological clarification;
- (e) to study the steps being taken by the churches towards closer unity with one another and to provide information concerning such steps;
- (f) to bring to the attention of the churches, by the best means available, reports of Faith and Order meetings and studies;
- (g) to provide opportunities for consultation among those whose churches are engaged in union negotiations or other specific efforts towards unity.

In pursuing these functions the following principles shall be observed:

- (i) Faith and Order in seeking to draw the churches into conversation and study, shall recognise that only the churches themselves are competent to initiate steps towards union by entering into negotiations with one another. The work of Faith and Order is to act, on their invitation, as helper and adviser.
- (ii) It shall conduct its work in such a way that all are invited to share reciprocally in giving and receiving and no one shall be asked to be disloyal to his or her convictions nor to compromise them. Differences are to be clarified and recorded as honestly as agreements.

4. Organization

- 4.1 The Faith and Order Standing Commission and Plenary Commission are constitutionally responsible to the Central Committee through the Programme Committee.
- 4.2 The Standing Commission will be responsible for initiating, implementing and laying down general guidelines of the programme of Faith and Order, in consultation with the Programme Committee, within the framework of the policies of the World Council of Churches as established by the Central Committee. It will guide the staff in the development of the Faith and Order programme, and supervise the ongoing work. It shall report annually to the Central Committee.

through the Programme Committee. In exceptional circumstances the Standing Commission, in consultation with the Officers of the WCC, shall be permitted to place an issue on the agenda of the Central Committee.

- 4.3 The Plenary Commission shall provide a broader frame of reference for the activities of the Standing Commission and in particular provide a forum for theological debate and a source of membership for participation in study groups and consultations. The members of the Plenary Commission will share in communicating the programme of Faith and Order to the churches.
- 4.4 The Standing Commission shall consist of not more than 30 members (including the Officers).
- 4.5 The Plenary Commission shall consist of not more than 120 members (including the Officers and other members of the Standing Commission).
- 4.6 The Standing Commission, before each Assembly, shall appoint a Nominations Committee to prepare a list of names for the election of the new Standing Commission by the Central Committee at its first meeting after the Assembly. The members will hold office until the next Assembly.
- 4.7 The Standing Commission, at its last meeting before each Assembly, shall propose a person as Moderator of Faith and Order for election by the Central Committee at its first meeting after the Assembly. The Moderator will hold office until the next Assembly.
- 4.8 At its first meeting after the Assembly, the Standing Commission shall elect not more than four Vice-Moderators from among its members. The Vice-Moderators will hold office until the next Assembly.
- 4.9 At its first meeting after the Assembly the Standing Commission shall prepare a list of names additional to the Moderator and members of the Standing Commission, for the election of the new Plenary Commission by the Central Committee at its next meeting. The Commissioners will hold office until the next Assembly.
- 4.10 Vacancies on the Standing Commission and Plenary Commission shall be

filled by the Central Committee on the nomination of the Standing Commission.

- 4.11 Since the size of the Standing Commission and the Plenary Commission and the provisions of by-law 4.12 preclude full representation of all member churches of the Council, appointment shall be made on the basis of personal capacity to serve the purposes of Faith and Order. At the same time, care shall be taken to secure a reasonable geographical and confessional representation of churches on the Standing Commission, the Plenary Commission and among the Officers and Secretariat. The membership of the Plenary Commission shall include a sufficient number of women, young and lay persons.
- 4.12 Persons who are members of churches which do not belong to the Council, but which confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour are eligible for membership of the Standing Commission and the Plenary Commission.
- 4.13 Before any candidate is nominated for appointment by the Central Committee, steps shall be taken to ensure that his or her name is acceptable to the church to which he or she belongs. A member should be willing to accept some responsibility for communication between Faith and Order and his or her church and ecumenical bodies in his or her country.

5. The Secretariat

- 5.1 The Faith and Order Secretariat shall be the members of the staff of the World Council of Churches who are assigned to the work of Faith and Order. For all external relationships and purposes the Coordinator of the Faith and Order Team in the Cluster: Issues and Themes will hold the title of "Director of the Secretariat of Faith and Order".
- 5.2 The staff will be appointed in accordance with the normal procedure for appointment of Council staff. The General Secretary shall, after due consultation with the Officers of Faith and Order, nominate for appointment or reappointment members of the executive staff of the Secretariat by the Central Committee or the Executive Committee of the Council. In the case of the Director of the Secretariat of Faith and Order, no nominations will be submitted to the Central Committee or the Executive Committee against the advice of the Standing Commission of Faith and Order.

5.3 The Secretariat shall be responsible for ensuring the continuation of the work of Faith and Order in accordance with the decisions agreed by Standing Commission, approved in accordance with the policy of the Central Committee. The Secretariat will keep in regular contact with the Officers and members of the Faith and Order Commission.

6. World Conferences

- 6.1 World Conferences on Faith and Order may be held when, on the recommendation of the Standing Commission, the Central Committee so decides.
- 6.2 The invitation to take part in such Conferences shall be addressed to the churches throughout the world which confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.
- 6.3 Such Conferences shall consist primarily of delegates appointed by the churches to represent them. Youth delegates, special advisers and observers may also be invited.
- 6.4 Careful attention shall be given to the communication of the reports and recommendations of the World Conferences to the churches.

7. Faith and Order Meetings

- 7.1 The Standing Commission shall meet at least every 18 months, but may be convened at any time by the Moderator in consultation with the other Officers of Faith and Order or at the request of not less than one third of the members of the Standing Commission.
- 7.2 The Plenary Commission shall normally meet once between Assemblies, but may be convened at any time by the Standing Commission with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Council.
- 7.3 The Secretariat shall be responsible for giving due notice of meetings of both the Standing Commission and the Plenary Commission, for keeping its minutes and other records and, in consultation with the Moderator, for preparing its agenda.

- 7.4 A member of the Standing Commission may name a person to represent him or her at any meeting at which the member is unable to be present, but such a person may not vote.
- 7.5 A member of the Plenary Commission, by advance notice in writing, signed by both the Commission member and the appropriate representative of the member's church, to the Secretariat may name a proxy to represent the member at any meeting at which the member is unable to be present.
- 7.6 Other persons may be invited to be present and to speak, if the Moderator so rules, but not to vote. In particular, in order to secure representation of its study groups, members of these may be invited to attend either body as consultants.
- 7.7 In the absence of the Moderator, one of the Vice-Moderators shall preside at such meetings. In the absence of any of these Officers, the meeting shall elect one of its members to take the chair. One third of the total membership (including proxies) shall constitute a quorum.
- 7.8 Faith and Order shall normally conduct its business according to the rule of procedure of the Central Committee. Questions arising about procedure shall be decided by a majority vote of those present and voting.
- 7.9 If, at any time when it is inconvenient to hold a meeting of the Standing Commission, the Moderator and Secretariat shall decide that there is business requiring immediate action by the Standing Commission, it shall be permissible for them to obtain by post or fax the opinions of its members and the majority opinion thus ascertained shall be treated as equivalent to the decision of a duly convened meeting.

8. Faith and Order Studies

- 8.1 The Standing Commission shall formulate and carry through the study programme.
- 8.2 The Secretariat, as authorised by the Standing Commission, shall invite persons to serve on the study groups and consultations. They shall pay particular

regard to the need to involve members of both the Standing Commission and Plenary Commission in the study programme, whether by membership of a study group, consultations or by written consultation. Due regard shall be paid to special competence in the fields of study concerned and to the need for the representation of a variety of ecclesiastical traditions and theological viewpoints.

- 8.3 Study groups shall normally include both those who are and those who are not members of the Standing Commission or Plenary Commission. They may also include persons who do not belong to members churches of the Council.
- 8.4 In planning such studies all possible contacts shall be sought or maintained with allied work already in progress under such auspices as those of regional or national councils or of individual churches or of ecumenical institutes and theological faculties or departments.
- 8.5 Study groups shall prepare reports, as requested, for discussion in the Standing Commission and the Plenary Commission, at World Conferences on Faith and Order or at Assemblies. Any such report should bear a clear indication of its status.
- 8.6 The publication of such reports and of other Faith and Order papers shall be the responsibility of the Secretariat, provided that adequate financial resources are available.

9. Finance

- 9.1 The financing of the work of Faith and Order will be undertaken in the normal way as part of the work of the Cluster: Issues and Themes. The Secretariat, in close consultation with the Standing Commission, shall be responsible for working with the Director and Finance Officer of the Cluster preparing a budget for the activities of Faith and Order.
- 9.2 The Standing Commission will receive reports on the budget and funding of the work of Faith and Order and will provide oversight of the detailed planning and policy in relation to the funding of programmatic activities (e.g. studies) and projects of Faith and Order within the overall policies and budget of the Cluster: Issues and Themes approved by the Central Committee.

9.3 The Standing Commission will assist in developing the financial resources available for the work of Faith and Order.

10. Communication with the Churches

The Standing Commission and the Plenary Commission shall be concerned to facilitate communication with the churches. They shall make generally available results of studies where such studies are formally communicated to the churches through the Central Committee. In certain studies the churches may be invited to make a formal response.

11. Revision of the By-Laws

Proposals for the amendment of these by-laws may be made by the Standing Commission or by the Central Committee in consultation with the Standing Commission and the Programme Committee. Any proposed amendment must be circulated in writing to the members of the Plenary Commission not less than three months before the meeting of the Standing Commission at which it is to be considered for adoption. A proposed amendment requires the approval of two-thirds of the members of the Standing Commission present and voting, before final approval by the Central Committee.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING between the Standing Commission of Faith and Order and the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches

Procedures for the nomination and election of members to the Plenary Commission and Standing Commission of Faith and Order

- 1. In accordance with the by-laws of Faith and Order 4.6 and 4.9 a list of names shall be submitted by the Standing Commission of Faith and Order for election by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches:
 - "The Standing Commission, before each Assembly, shall appoint a nominations committee to prepare a list of names for the election of the new Standing Commission by the Central Committee at its first meeting after the assembly" (§4.6) and "for the election of the new Plenary Commission by the Central Committee at its next meeting" (§4.9).
- 2. When these lists are submitted to the General Secretariat of the World Council of Churches, they shall be accompanied by a tabulation of the appropriate balances regional, confessional, gender and younger theologians. This tabulation shall be accompanied by a rationale from the Standing Commission in respect of balances proposed.
- 3. The Director of the Secretariat of Faith and Order and the Moderator of the Commission on Faith and Order shall make themselves available for explanation and consultation if and as appropriate at any meetings established by the Executive or Central Committee to discuss the list of nominations.
- 4. In the event of such meetings challenging the list of nominations, the Director of the Faith and Order Secretariat shall consult with the Officers of the Commission on Faith and Order to seek ways to readdress the list of nominations

on the basis of the proposals from the member churches for the Faith and Order Commission and in the light of the discussions at the previous meeting of the Standing Commission. Should such a challenge arise during the Assembly of the World Council of Churches, this consultation would involve the Officers of the outgoing Standing Commission of Faith and Order.

5. Where it has not been possible to address the challenge to the list to the satisfaction of both parties, an incomplete list of names shall be presented to Central Committee and the matter referred back to the next meeting of the Standing Commission of Faith and Order.

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AFRICA: CHALLENGES FOR THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

1. Introduction

Africa has changed so radically, and so often, in these last few hundred years. The Africans have been used and abused; the evil of apartheid grew and prospered; the rich mineral resources of the continent became fair game for others and the standard of living of Africans declined. But the heartbeat of Africa is still strong and steady as witnessed at the Africa Plenary of the Eighth General Assembly, Harare, Zimbabwe. There is indeed a renaissance in Africa and there is indeed a new vision being born in African theology and spirituality.¹

Eric Hobsbawm, the most outstanding British historian now living, describes the twentieth century in terms of extremes. In his celebrated book, *The Age of Extremes* he argues that, from the point of view of history the twentieth century was a short one spanning 1914-1991.² He advances very convincing reasons. But for Africa the twentieth century was quite a long and tortuous one. It started in 1884 with the partitioning of the continent at the Berlin Conference, and ended in 1994 with the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first truly democratically elected president of a new South Africa. The two reference points signify the twin legacy of the experience of Africa in her relationship with Europe - that of exploitation and domination on the one hand, and resistance and struggles on the other. The defeat of apartheid was the end point fulfillment of the vision articulated by the Pan-Africanist movement - the vision of political independence for the whole of Africa, from Egypt to South Africa, and from Eritrea to Congo.

Paradoxically, while the era of colonial domination was being buried in Pretoria, a new question sprang from the earth in Rwanda - the question of viable and inclusive governance systems for Africa and the economic and cultural benefits derived therefrom. The most gruesome and meticulously planned slaughter of human beings took place in Rwanda precisely as Mandela was being installed president of post-apartheid South Africa. In fact some of the journalists who covered Mandela's inauguration were redirected to Rwanda to cover the genocide. So in South Africa and in Rwanda, "Africa was witnessing, at once, the most hopeful and the most distressing events imaginable."

2. The Partitioning of the Continent, the makings of the first dream for a better Africa, and the Nation-State Problematic

In the introduction to his voluminous and most comprehensive book, <u>The Scramble for Africa</u>, Thomas Pakenham opens with these words: "The scramble for Africa bewildered everyone, from the humblest African peasant to the master statesmen of the age, Lord Salisbury and Prince Bismarck." Exactly 115 years ago decisions were arrived at in Berlin that were to determine the future and destiny of Africa and her people.

In the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 Africans were not consulted much less represented. Present at the conference were all European nations except Switzerland. USA did not attend. David Livingstone, the "missionary-explorer" was most insightful when he coined the "3 Cs"; commerce, Christianity and civilization, as the strategy for opening up Africa to Europeans. To the "3 Cs" Africans would, of course, add a fourth, "conquest". Livingstone argued that trade, not the gun, would liberate Africa. But even a casual evaluation would show that trade, like the gun, was harmful to Africa. Either way you look at it the African was the loser. For the participants at the Berlin Conference, Africa was recognized merely as a great reservoir of imperial treasure. The natural resources featured prominently on the agenda but not the people of Africa. The people did not matter even when they were defining "the conditions under which future territorial annexations in Africa might be recognized."

If the Berlin Conference initiated the colonial project, the liberation project has its genesis in the first Pan-African Congress in Paris, 1919. The Congress called for freedom, democracy, justice, economic betterment and human dignity for the African people. This message from Paris was sharpened further at the Fifth Pan-Africa Congress in Manchester in 1945 at which the delegates from Africa and diaspora stated, "We are determined to be free and we shall be free. We will fight in every way we can for freedom, democracy and social betterment." That vision was to guide the African struggles for liberation. It was finally fulfilled with the end of institutional apartheid in South Africa in 1994.

Whether we look at the Africa of 1884 or the one of 1999, economics is a powerful factor in determining the relationships between the outside world and Africa. Cecil Rhodes did not mince words when he confessed that:

"...my cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, i.e. in order to save the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, and to provide new markets for the goods produced in the factories and mines. An empire, as I have always said, is a bread and butter question." (emphasis added)

This clearly demonstrates that Africa was colonized more for her economic significance to Europe than for anything else. Everything else was either secondary or was a means and strategy to that end. Today the bewildered African peasant and even the European statesman must be totally lost as to where or even what Africa is.

In the struggle against colonialism, nationalism became both a means and an end in itself. Little, and in some cases, no efforts were made to link the aspirations of the people and practical realities of what would constitute a new nation to be born out of the struggle. As Frantz Fanon clearly puts it,

"National consciousness, instead of being the all-embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of the whole people, instead of being the immediate and most obvious result of the mobilization of the people, will be in any case only an empty shell, a crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been. The faults that we find in it are quite sufficient explanation of the facility with which, when dealing with young and independent nations, the nation is passed over for the race, and the tribe is preferred to the state."

With independence the reins of power were passed to the leaders who had been ushered in by the masses, acting more on spontaneity than a rational understanding of what such independence entails. On their part the elite middle class, who were the only ones well placed to assume political leadership seized the opportunity to grab. To them independence simply meant hoisting a flag, composing a new national anthem and taking over the positions of the out-going colonial personnel. Independence therefore was reduced to "flag-independence". The economy was not in the scheme of things as far as this leadership was concerned. Taking over, and not transformation of the economy, was the basic objective.

So one of the things that went wrong with the first African dream was that the

national economy at independence was not set on a new footing. The second one was the adoption of the nation-state as a model for the new independent "nations" of Africa.

Soon after attainment of political independence the African leader was to discover that he could not deliver goods to the people. He had no economic base of his own. The economic system the leader inherited could only be maintained (not developed) by the colonial master he was supposed to have kicked out. That indeed was a rude reality, and what was even more shocking to the African leader was to learn that his own survival as a leader, and the survival of his government, depended on subsidies from the former colonial power. The pride of nationalism melted away and the new African leader simply settled down to amass wealth for himself and family, and could not care less whether the national economy was plundered to the ground. In fact he became the greatest looter of the economy even as his life style was characterized by conspicuous consumption totally oblivious to the abject poverty of the masses. Since the masses were now an enemy he needed a bigger army and bigger police force to control them. Disproportionate budget allocations vis-a-vis social welfare, like health and education, were directed towards security.

Too unpopular to face free elections, the African heads of states discovered new tactics and strategies for staying in power, such as one-party rule. In most cases elections were postponed *sine die*, or the president simply decreed all other political parties except his own to be illegal. Military coups d'état or assassinations became the only alternative methods of change in ruling. That is why Africa has hardly any former presidents but many late heads of state.

The role of the intelligentsia began to be ambiguous. Many succumbed to the patronage of the political leadership. They served to rationalize the status quo and were rewarded accordingly. The majority of journalists fell into this category; they dared not write anything critical of the government, and least of all the president, who by this time had acquired the venerated title of the "Father of the Nation". Nor did they dare advocate for the poor and the oppressed. Artists even composed songs full of lavish praise of the man (without exception all presidents were, and still are, men) describing him *sine qua non* as far as the existence of the nation and its people were concerned. Those intellectuals are distinguished by their intellectual dishonesty.

A small number of intelligentsia, though, dared to be honest to themselves and kept faith with the people. They spoke out. They risked imprisonment and even death. They criticized the political leadership either, in the first instance, satirically as in the enormous body of literature in the African Writer Series, or lately, directly. Those were the first candidates of African exiles, who today are numerous in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

With the number of "enemies" increasing by the day, protection of his regime became the highest preoccupation of the African head of state. He was least concerned about the state of the national economy or that of the citizens, most of whom he suspected of disliking him all the while.

The flawed nation-state model

The second problem, and arguably the main root cause of the woes of Africa, is the nation-statism which was adopted at the independence. The most frequently cited reasons for the failure of governance and stability in Africa are corruption, ethnicism and nepotism, and external exploitation. Hardly mentioned, especially in the mass media, are the flaws and failures of the nation-state model itself. But there is now a discourse emerging that seriously questions the legitimacy of the nation-state for Africa.

Already by the 1980s it was clear that the nation-state model was not functioning well in Africa. It was a flawed model and political independence did not redress the situation, because, according to Basil Davidson, "the first generation of African leaders failed to re-establish vital inner links with the poor and dispossessed of this [continent];" or, "it was the failure of post-colonial communities to find and insist upon means of living together by strategies less primitive and destructive than rural kinship networks, whether the ethnic clientism or its camouflage in no less clientist multi-party systems."

If you have someone on your back, against your will, the most natural thing to do is to get him off your back. That is the priority. Thereafter when you have rid yourself of the oppressive weight on your back, you then pause to decide what to do with the attained freedom. It seems that is what happened with Africa. At the time of colonialism the most pressing issue was to attain political freedom. Even those who foresaw some of the dangers inherent in the impending post-colonial nation-state, and even warned against them, finally accepted inde-

pendence within the colonial framework. Nkrumah, for instance, while accepting the British government's offer to lead the then colonial Gold Coast to independent Ghana, said to the Ghanian people that "there is a great risk in accepting office under this new constitution which still makes us half-slaves and half-free." Very few understood, much less heeded Nkrumah's warning.

The majority of leaders were preoccupied with the promises of independence and that resonated with the aspirations of the people. Nationalism therefore had much less to do with national cause, and more to do with the demands of a social nature and content. The Malagasy nationalist, Jacques Rabemananjara, remarked in 1958 that, "one thing's certain, in today's political vocabulary the word nationalism means, generally, the unanimous movement of coloured peoples against western domination. What does it matter if the word doesn't really describe the phenomenon to which we like to apply it?" It is because of such pragmatism that the struggles for political independence have been seen in terms of social struggle through which aspirations like getting back the land, better education and better health services for all would be fulfilled.

It is important to note that some African leaders, though, had alternative views to the nation-state model but they stood no chance of promoting their ideas. In 1946 Africans representing twelve French colonies held a congress in Bamako with the intention of forming "a political movement dedicated to the realization of two large independent federations instead of twelve nation-states". Their counterparts in the British colonies also had discussions about forming federations either before or shortly after independence. But the British and French were so intent on transferring power to post-colonial nation-states that they could not tolerate anything to do with potential federations. Their concern with the emerging nation-states in Africa was not so much whether they served African interests but that they should be in line with British or French national interests. As Davidson comments,

"[A]fter 1950 the British in power persisted with a remarkable complacency in shepherding the British colonies, not into a society of interrelated states such as the pioneering nationalists desired for their continent, but into accumulation of newly invented and entirely separate nation-states, a very different thing."

For their part the French strategy was to elevate their colonies in membership in *la plus grande France*. The only nationalism they recognized was the French nationalism.

Once those objectives were set, what the British and the French needed to do was to spot and promote the "right" candidates for leadership in the impending nation-states.

The benefits concomitant with the promised high offices whetted the appetite of the candidates and they became very enthusiastic protagonists of nation-statism and national building. They were indeed the *interlocuteurs valables* after the necessary tutoring and went on to negotiate independence within the rubric of nation-states.

Several critical points were overlooked in the decision by the colonial powers to offer, and for the African nationalists to accept, the nation-state model:

- 1) The acceptance of the nation-state model for independent Africa meant the acceptance of the moral and political practices of colonial rule in its institutions. The colonial partition legacy had far-reaching implications not only for governance but in social, cultural and psychological aspects of peoples' lives.
- 2) Nation-statism is to be understood in its ethos and ideology whose practices were incompatible with the interests and aspirations of the people of Africa.
- 3) No opportunities were offered to discuss credentials and potentials of the nation-state, nor to explore possible alternatives. The model was simply imposed on the Africans who, needless to emphasize, were the weaker party in the negotiations for independence.
- 4) In many cases the national consciousness, a prerequisite to establishment of the nation-state in Europe (and one that took many decades to develop), existed only in the hope of a few educated elite in Africa. From the point of view of colonial powers the interests and aspirations of the ordinary folk did not count. Their views are summed up in the words of a British observer in 1920, concerning the peasants in Moldavia and Walachia; he said that in respect to politics peasants are "a dead and helpless mass." That means as far as the British and

French were concerned, the peasants had no right to be considered in the equation and negotiations for independence of their countries. And subsequently the African leader did not involve the peasants in the governance of the state.

From the point of view of the interests of the African people the legitimacy of the nation-state is further questioned vis-a-vis its (the state's) role in the Cold War era. The African countries became battle fields of super power rivalry. Either of the super powers helped the state to acquire the capacity to control and suppress the people. So, both during the colonial period as well as the post colonial period, the concept and the practice of the state was to be an instrument of control. The state was not about good governance but control. That led to the privatization of the state, which all the while became a formidable force, not to serve the interests of the people, but in effect and in fact, as a threat to their interests.

Politics in Africa, therefore, has been shaped by that understanding of the nationstate in Africa. It is primarily about access to state power, and the goal of political struggle is to capture the all-powerful state power. In that case, state power in Africa is overvalued, and the struggle over it, is brutal, intense and ruthless.

The big question is how do you turn around, or better still, transform the nation-state in Africa to serve the interests of the people. Such is the daunting task ahead for the African people at the dawn of the new century and the third millennium. No wonder then that Basil Davidson describes the nation-state in Africa as "the black man's burden". It is to be remembered that the "civilizing of the African savages was once described as "the white man's burden."

3. The quest for a new vision

The Pan-Africanist vision of political independence by all means possible was a strong reaction to the European colonial project perfected at the 1884-5 Berlin Conference. For a century, that vision would inspire and guide the liberation struggles in Africa until 1994 when formal apartheid came to an end. With the end of apartheid the Pan-Africanist vision was vindicated. But that did not mean the end of exploitation and domination of Africa by external powers, nor the end of self-authenticated suffering and oppression by despotic African leaders. The challenge now is for Africans to dream new dreams and see new visions. There

is need for overarching, long term visions to inform and guide the new struggles against new problems and challenges.

It will be too pretentious for this background note to attempt at formulating such visions. What it attempts to do is to identify possible signs of hope that might lead to articulation of new visions for building a better Africa.

Reconstruction

From Christian theological reflection liberation, as a theme, is derived from Exodus in the Old Testament. The liberation of the Israelites from the bondage in Egypt has inspired many oppressed peoples around the world, and served as a basis for many Christians to legitimize their involvement in the struggle against oppression. That was the case for African struggles against colonialism and apartheid, Latin Americans and Asians against dictatorships of despotic leaders, and African Americans against racism. Through such struggles liberation came to mean more than political freedom. It became a paradigm for struggle for justice, peace and the recovery of human dignity. Those values could not be attained through the developmentalist paradigm either.

In the 1990s Christian theology has pointed to the imperatives of shifting the "paradigms from the post-Exodus to Post-Exile imagery, with reconstruction as the resultant theological axiom." Mugambi continues to contend that, "the twenty-first century should be a century of reconstruction in Africa." The call for reconstruction is not limited to the theological realm. In secular circles as well there are initiatives for social reconstruction. Even governments have formulated and operated programmes and projects of reconstruction, most notable among them being the South African government's RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme).

The contemporary Africa may be compared to Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when a process of reconstruction followed long periods of cultural stagnation and Islamic onslaught. That re-awakening in Europe was envisaged as **renaissance** to signify the rebirth of the society. The need for rebirth of the African society cannot be over-emphasized.

A lot of reflection and work on reconstruction in Africa have been done in the last five years. Several books have been written on theology of reconstruction

and on social reconstruction.

In the run up to the Eighth General Assembly, the World Council of Churches (WCC) carried out a programme under the title of **Towards Reconstruction in Africa**. The objectives of the programme were to listen to the voices of the churches and peoples and learn from their experience of life with God in their country, region and the African situation in general; to promote a culture of life and peace with justice on which should be based the quest for just, participatory and sustainable societies; to enhance the fulfilment of human dignity in Africa and the affirmation of the African identity; to discern the Church's mission in peace-making, conflict prevention and management, and reconciliation at community and national levels, taking into account respective African values; to promote national, regional and pan-African cooperation in the search for peace, sustainable and viable communities; and to enhance the contribution of the churches to the building of democracy; facilitating a coordinate analytical focus on situations of severe human and people's rights violation.

In collaboration with NCCs, AACC and some northern ecumenical partners, the WCC has been able to promote models for active solidarity with Africa, especially with the faith communities and nations at large, in order to identify ways of developing and/or stimulating new forms of solidarity between churches and peoples of each region with the ecumenical family and the international community at large; and encourage the movement of ideas and people in support of the efforts of Africans towards life with dignity and for the creation of sustainable communities.

For continued work under this imperative to be effective we must discover the solid foundations upon which reconstruction is to be effected. We must discover the wholenesses that would guarantee sustainable reconstruction. Wholeness, because there is prevailing alienation and fragmentation experienced by the people in virtually all realms of life - social, cultural, political, economic and even ecclesial.

The renewed efforts and interests in the study of the nature and tenets of the "African Religion" by the African scholars signifies the "thirst" and search for life in all its wholeness. In this vein dialogue between African Religion and Christianity will certainly gather greater currency in the twenty-first century. It

is also likely that a dialogue between "palaver" and "ethics of discourse" will be inevitable because of the growing interest in ethical dimensions of African communities. The need for such dialogue is not just for the benefit of Africans but it will be mutual. The deeper scholars understand primal traditions the more they realize the potential contribution of African Religion to understanding and meaning of life of humans and the whole creation. In his reflections of these themes, Bediako of Ghana is convinced that "it is in Africa that the opportunity for a serious theological encounter and cross-fertilization between Christian and primal traditions [African Religion], which was lost in Europe, can be regained; and Africa may well be the place for redeeming wrongs done not to her alone in the name of mission." Miller affirms Bendiako's conviction when he suggests that, "whatever the nature of Africa's future, it is now clear that its religious heritage in the form of African Religion and Christianity as received via the missionary encounter will be in the service of the continent's reconstruction." 10

Reconstruction of Africa must be informed by **communitarian ethic**. Community consciousness in Africa is a precious virtue that must be guarded carefully. For Africans life is community centered. "The African thought and action are deeply determined by the community" without which the life of the individual could be greatly deficient. The individual gives to the community and in return receives manifold from the community. Hence there is mutuality between the individual human person and the community. Their interaction generates interdependency which is based on the fact that all members of the community have the task of mutually increasing the life force for the benefit of all. "Everybody's behavior and ethical action have consequences for the whole community: the good contributes to the increase of life, while the evil destroys or at least reduces life." 12

The communitarian ethic therefore has a lot to offer in both social and ethical reconstruction in Africa. It could in fact provide a solid basis for economic and political reconstruction as well.

With such rich religious heritage the African has a lot to offer in the dialogue and cross-fertilization between Africa and the rest of humanity. It also means that "Africa's future will not be secured by wholesale adoption of western economic, technical and social models though it is clear that it has been enormously influenced by them. Africa is not an island to itself. But the case is made that

the people of this continent must be open to the world from a clear, well articulated perspective, based on Africa's religious and cultural values as well as an inclusive African process, accounting for the needs of all."¹³

As above, the process leading to political independence did not allow for serious search for viable and inclusive governance systems at the time of political independence. There are questions in Africa such as "when is a nation state?" or "what is the role of a nation state?" So reconstruction of legitimacy is central, as a basis for reconciliation and rebuilding. There is great urgency to rebuild institutions, modalities and processes which ensure a broad consensus among the main actors in the society on the exercise of power, institutions of the state and on the acquisition and utilization of resources. The church is just about the only visible institution, apart from the state, all other institutions in the civil society having been systematically disabled during the Cold War era. Hence it is clear that in Africa there is a crisis of institutions and any serious efforts at reconstruction must include reconstruction of institutions of civil society.

Illegitimacy of "liberation" struggles

In Africa the second half of the twentieth century was characterized by liberation struggles. Such struggles were legitimate because they were the means through which Africans were to achieve self-determination and recover the dignity which had been sacrificed on the altar of colonialism. With the end of apartheid the noble project of decolonization was achieved. Except for Southern Sudan and the former Spanish Sahara the legitimacy of other so-called struggles for liberation must be questioned. In this respect the causes and objectives of civil wars in Africa are to be critically analyzed and evaluated by anyone wanting to take a position one way or the other. One thing, though, is clear; the civil wars that are hangovers from Cold War have no legitimacy whatsoever. Angola is a case in point. UNITA can hardly claim to be fighting for the total liberation of Angola anymore.

The war in Angola is a hangover from the Cold War era which has since degenerated into banditry and cannot in any way, shape or form be termed a liberation process. Worse still is the case of Sierra Leone. That war is sheer madness. The so-called rebels are responsible for the most diabolical atrocities ever. The killings and amputations of many innocent men, women, children and old people especially disqualify the rebel movement in Sierra Leone from any

claim or pretenses to redeeming the society. Its leaders have no business being part of a government of national unity. Instead they should be at the Hague facing trial for crimes against humanity.

Of late there have emerged new levels and ways of intervention in Africa. A good case in point is the Great Lakes Region (GLR) where we can observe very dangerous developments. Something must be done before these new forms/ways of intervention are institutionalized through private armies. The failure to arrest the process could lead to total disintegration of states like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Already there is talk of mercenaries in DRC whose main interests are to benefit from the natural riches of the country. As in the case of the rhino's horn, the natural resources are the curse of Africa.

As a result of such interventions and the widespread abuse of power by leaders, the African people are being penalized for refusing to be oppressed and for not allowing their resources to be plundered. This calls the ecumenical movement to find new ways of expressing solidarity and building relationships. How are we to understand our advocacy work vis-a-vis these developments in Africa in the twenty-first century?

Legitimacy of other forms of social intervention

While the need for peace and reconciliation in many parts of Africa cannot be disputed, there is nevertheless the need to be critical of some of the actors and methodologies in this area. Following the genocide in Rwanda and conflicts in GLR there has been a proliferation of peace makers most of whom are not accountable to anybody. Conflict resolution has become simply fashionable if also very profitable. Similarly in the wake of democratization process, democracy specialists have descended on Africa. There is also a residue of development specialists whose motives are questionable.

Given this scenario it is obvious that conflicts are inevitable. What does peacemaking mean here? Peace initiatives based on African traditional/cultural values must be encouraged. In this vein the work of *Nairobi Peace Initiatives* is welcome and should be supported.

Life with dignity in just and sustainable communities

Caring for life as an overarching focus is very relevant for Africa. Given the

enormous senseless and unnecessary loss of lives in Africa today, whether as a result of debt or other causes, we must revisit the whole question of the sanctity of life. The nature of conflicts and the form of violence prevalent in Africa today are very strange to the people of Africa. Traditionally the warriors, or any others doing the fighting, were totally forbidden to kill women and children. That is why we cannot understand what kind of breed are the rebels of Sierra Leone who dare kill and maim children and old people.

Legacy of domination and the struggle for self-determination for human dignity

There are indications that suggest that in the early decades of the twenty-first century there will be a preoccupation with the search for what it takes to right the wrongs of the previous century, and millennium. In this respect several characteristics are relevant: repentance, forgiveness, reparations, reconciliation and healing.

This is critical for Africa. Violation of dignity of the African people must be addressed and redressed. This should be the case for Africans both on the continent and in the diaspora. In both situations the African people continue to live with wounded and compromised dignity.

It is at the same time a problem of impunity. Reparations do not have only to assume material dimensions. Violation of dignity is not only a justice question, it is a deeply theological one. That makes it imperative for the ecumenical movement to accompany the African people in their attempt to deal with the legacy of domination and all its derivatives.

In this respect racism in the twenty-first century should be considered in a new light. It took the brutal murder of Stephan Lawrence for Britain to accept there was institutionalized racism in the London Metropolitan Police Force. What lessons do we learn from that development for the ecumenical work on racism in the years ahead?

Identities and Security

De-construction and Reconstruction should be understood as initiatives for regionalization and are indicative of the perceived flaws of the nation state model. In concrete terms the regionalization has found expressions in the forma-

tion of Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Cooperation (EACOOP) and Economic Community for Western African States (ECOWAS). What does this say to the issue of territorial integrity? Africans have generally agreed to keep the boundaries set by the colonial powers. But the regionalization initiatives suggest there is a strong desire to transcend geographical boundaries to achieve certain social, cultural and economic interests.

There is a very interesting process that gives ecumenical parallel to the economic regionalization. This has led to formation of Fellowship of Councils of Churches in Eastern and Southern Africa (FOCCESA), Fellowship of Christian Councils in Western Africa (FCCIWA) and Fellowship of Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECLAHA). Alongside with AACC these fellowships are key ecumenical partners. At its launching in March 1999, FECLAHA committed itself to strive to encourage the citizens of that region to live as a people without boundaries. In so doing they are saying the boundaries created by the partitioning of Africa were for purposes of exploiting and dominating Africans. To that end those regionalization initiatives are exercises in de-construction of what was undertaken by the Berlin Conference. But they could also be seen as building blocks for reconstruction based on legitimate interests of the African people.

Conclusion

The excitements of the new millennium have to be tempered with the new responsibilities we will have as an ecumenical movement. The present millennium has been a complicated tapestry of history with some wonderful achievements. But there have also been some intensely sad and tragic times. The millennium ends with new forms of colonialism replacing the conquests of the last few hundred years. There is so much wrong that we have to set right in this new millennium. There are memories to be healed, and broken relationships to be reconciled. God grant that we might see this magic January 1, 2000 as a challenge rather than merely a celebration¹⁴ and that it may be the millennium of righting the wrongs, redeeming the history and discovering harmony with Creation.

Notes:

- 1. S. Kobia: paper presented to Faith and Order Commission, June 1999, Toronto, p.5.
- 2. E. Hobsbawm: The Age of Extremes, 1994. Vintage Books, New York, p.3.
- 3. Hobson: Imperialism: A Study.
- 4. F. Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, p.148.
- 5. B. Davidson: *The Black Man's Burden*, 1993. E.A. Educational Publishers Ltd., Nairobi.
- 6. Ibid. p.164.
- 7. Ibid. p.172.
- 8. J.N.K.Mugambi: From Liberation to Reconstruction, E.A. Educational Publishers Ltd., Nairobi.
- 9. Harold Miller: "Perspectives on the Closure of an African Century", unpublished paper presented to a Mennonite retreat, Limuru, Kenya, Dec. 1998, p.12.
- 10. Ibid.
- 11. Benezer Bujo: *The Ethical Dimensions of Community*, 1998. Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, p.182.
- 12. Ibid.
- 13. Miller, op.cit., p.13.
- 14. Kobia, op.cit.

THE DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace

Geneva, September 1999

To: WCC Member Churches
National Councils of Churches
Regional Ecumenical Organizations
International Ecumenical Organizations
Christian World Communions
Seminaries and Academies
Ecumenical Partners

Dear friends,

This letter comes to you with warm Christian greetings from the Central Committee of the WCC which met from 26 August - 3 September, 1999 for the first time after the Eighth Assembly at Harare/Zimbabwe in December 1998. As you may be aware, the assembly had decided to proclaim the period from 2001-2010 as an "Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence". Now, the Central Committee has taken the first steps in preparation for the Decade and invites you to join and participate in this process.

Discussion at the Central Committee meeting has made us aware once again that we are all touched by violence. As individuals, churches, and organizations we are aware of violence within countries and on street corners, among ethnic groups and in families, between individuals and between nations. We experience these tragedies, and as Christians, must confess that we are often passive witnesses to, and even participants in, the violence. As Christians, we have been and continue to be committed to working towards overcoming this violence and to building bridges for healing and reconciliation.

As we enter into an intensive planning and preparation stage, we particularly encourage you to join us in developing the issues and methods that will provide focus for the Decade to Overcome Violence, specifically by reflecting on these key questions:

- 1. What issues of overcoming violence does your church, organization, or community need to address?
- 2. What efforts, resources, opportunities would your church, organization, or community like to contribute to the Decade to Overcome Violence?
- 3. What do you hope will be achieved by the Decade to Overcome Violence?

As a body representing the fellowship of churches, we as Central Committee have reflected on the message the Decade to Overcome Violence has for us, and discussed a basic framework document for the first five years. These documents are enclosed for your reflection.

We invite you to participate in preparing for the Decade to Overcome Violence by contributing your ideas and organizing your community to join in the celebration and the challenge of this Decade. The Decade to Overcome Violence will be officially launched in January 2001.

We look forward to having your insights, input and participation as we pursue, together, the things that make for peace. If you would like to receive further information about the Decade, please write to the address below.

Yours in Christ,

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Please send your responses to:

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Decade to Overcome Violence
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THE DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace

Message by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches

Seek peace and pursue it. (Psalm 34:14)

In response to a call by the Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, we embark on a Decade to Overcome Violence in the years 2001-2010 and invite churches, ecumenical groups, individual Christians and people of good will to contribute to it.

We are gathered for the first Central Committee meeting after the Harare Assembly at the end of the most violent century in human history. We are convinced: the churches are called to provide to the world a clear witness to peace, to reconciliation and non-violence, grounded in justice.

We remember the saints and martyrs who have given their lives as a witness for God against the powers of violence, destruction and war. We recall the witness of people who became signs of hope within and beyond their respective communities, opening up alternatives to the deadly cycle of violence. As representatives of member churches of the World Council of Churches, we are inspired by the Gospel message of the peace of Christ, of love and of reconciliation, and the rich biblical tradition of peace with justice. God's promise of life and peace for all humankind and creation calls us to make our lives consistent with our faith, as individuals and as communities of faith.

But we are also aware that Christians and churches have added, through words and actions, to growing violence and injustice in a world of oppression and graceless competition. We are yearning for a community of humankind, in which nobody is excluded and everybody can live in peace with human dignity. As we engage in constructive efforts to build a culture of peace, we know that we are required to embark upon a deep process of change, beginning with repentance and a renewed commitment to the very sources of our faith.

We must give up being spectators of violence or merely lamenting it and must act

to overcome violence both within and outside the walls of the church. We remind ourselves and the churches of our common responsibility to speak out boldly against any defense of unjust and oppressive structures, of racism, of the use of violence, including especially violence against women and children, and of other gross violations of human rights committed in the name of any nation or ethnic group. If churches do not combine their witness for peace and reconciliation with the search for unity among themselves, they fail in their mission to the world. Leaving behind what separates us, responding ecumenically to the challenge, proving that non-violence is an active approach to conflict resolution, and offering in all humility what Jesus Christ taught his disciples to do, the churches have a unique message to bring to the violence-ridden world.

There are a number of positive and encouraging examples from congregations and churches around the world. We recognize the steady witness of monastic traditions and of the "historic peace churches", and we want to receive anew their contribution through the Decade. There are congregations and churches that have become centers of reflection and training for active non-violence in their own context. They show the kind of courage, skills and creativity that is necessary for active non-violence and non-violent resistance. They are sensitive to the destruction of nature and concentrate on the situation of the most vulnerable groups. Part of the contribution to building a culture of peace involves listening to the stories of those who are the primary victims of violence, including people who are poor, women, youth and children, people with disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples.

There are those who teach us through their example that presence in the situations of violence, on the streets and in the war torn areas, the active involvement with victims and perpetrators of violence, is the very key to every process of transformation and change. The WCC has had a concern for peace-making since its inception. Indeed, prior to the Harare Assembly, the WCC Programme to Overcome Violence and the Peace to the City Campaign have shown: peace is practical, it grows at grassroots level and is nurtured by the creativity of the people. They cooperate locally with civil society and engage in dialogue and common action with people of other faith. The groups from the seven cities participating in the campaign were strengthened and encouraged by each other, sharing their experiences across different contexts and gaining new insight from reflection and exchange at the global level.

The Decade to Overcome Violence will provide a platform to share stories and experiences, develop relationships and learn from each other. The Decade will build upon the initiatives that are already there; we recognize that our work is parallel to the work of the United Nations "Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World". We hope to connect with such initiatives and help them to motivate and strengthen each other. It will facilitate the churches to assist and support each other in their ministry. We offer with the Decade to Overcome Violence a truly ecumenical space, a safe space for encounter, mutual recognition, and common action, along with people of other faiths and all people of good will. We will strive together to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence. We will work together to be agents of reconciliation and peace with justice in homes, churches and communities as well as in the political, social and economic structures at national and international levels. We will co-operate to build a culture of peace that is based on just and sustainable communities.

The Gospel vision of peace is a source of hope for change and a new beginning. Let us not betray what has been given to us. People around the world wait with eager longing for Christians to become who we are: children of God embodying the message of love, peace with justice and reconciliation.

Peace is possible. Peace is practical. Seek peace and pursue it.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God. (Matthew 5:9)

A BASIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE

- Working document adopted by the Central Committee -

Introduction

The Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches gathered together under an African cross, in Harare, Zimbabwe, to discern priorities and programmes for the next seven years. Around the Assembly theme, "Turn to God - Rejoice in Hope," delegates established the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV). The Assembly stated that the WCC must "work strategically with the churches on these issues of non-violence and reconciliation to create a culture of non-violence, linking and interacting with other international partners and organizations, and examining and developing appropriate approaches to conflict transformation and just peace-making in the new globalized context." The WCC intends, therefore, to further its solidarity with Africa and grow together with the world communion of people who are building cultures of non-violence and peace.

Faithful to the Assembly's mandate, the focus of the WCC's work during the Decade to Overcome Violence will be on the concept "overcome", rather than "violence". Therefore, the methodology will bring out the positive experiences of churches and groups working towards overcoming violence. The Decade to Overcome Violence must grow out of the experiences and work of local churches and community contexts. The WCC can facilitate the exchange, act as a switchboard, and highlight experiences of local peace-building, peace-keeping, and prevention of violence. The Decade to Overcome Violence, however, should move beyond WCC structures in Geneva to include all member churches, non member churches, NGOs, and other organizations that are committed to peace.

The Decade to Overcome Violence, therefore, will highlight and network efforts by churches, ecumenical organizations, and civil society movements to overcome different types of violence. The WCC should seek to establish points of contact with the relevant aims, programmes, and architecture of the United Nations Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World

(2001-2010). It is important for the Decade to Overcome Violence to focus on the specific and unique contributions of both the individual member churches and the WCC as a whole.

Calling on the WCC's rich heritage of programmes for peace and justice, the organizers for the WCC's work on the Decade to Overcome Violence can build on, and create continuity with, models of coordinating a decade, campaigns, and programmes. Organizers will particularly consider the following methodologies: team visits and *Living Letters* (such as those of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women [EDCSW]) to address concerns and perspectives from all over the world; World Wide Web, video, and print materials (Peace to the City campaign); exchanges and visits. The Decade to Overcome Violence should further these methodologies. The Decade to Overcome Violence should continue the work already done through the Programme to Overcome Violence and the Peace to the City campaign.

I. GOALS

In order to move peace-building from the periphery to the centre of the life and witness of the church and to build stronger alliances and understanding among churches, networks, and movements which are working toward a culture of peace, the goals of the Decade to Overcome Violence are:

- Addressing holistically the *wide varieties of violence*, both direct and structural, in homes, communities, and in international arenas and learning from the local and regional analyses of violence and ways to overcome violence.
- Challenging the churches to *overcome the spirit, logic, and practice of violence*; to relinquish any theological justification of violence; and to affirm anew the spirituality of reconciliation and active non-violence.
- Creating a *new understanding of security* in terms of cooperation and community, instead of in terms of domination and competition.
- Learning from the *spirituality and resources for peace-building of other* faiths to work with communities of other faiths in the pursuit of peace and

to challenge the churches to reflect on the misuse of religious and ethnic identities in pluralistic societies.

- Challenging the *growing militarization* of our world, especially the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

II. A BASIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE

1. Keys to designing and implementing the Decade to Overcome Violence

- Allowing multiple entry points through which churches, groups, and issues may join and find their voice
- Ensuring and supporting creative, effective, professional communication as central to the process and success of the Decade to Overcome Violence
- Sustaining momentum over the ten years
- Using different methodologies appropriate to specific goals
- Developing clearly defined goals for the mid-point of the Decade to Overcome Violence (2005 Assembly), as well as for the end of the Decade in 2010
- Involving all WCC clusters and teams in the Decade to Overcome Violence

2. Two stages of the Decade to Overcome Violence

2001-2005, culminating in the WCC's Ninth Assembly (2005) 2006-2010, culminating in an end of the Decade celebration

3. Phases of the Decade to Overcome Violence

Phase I: 1999-2000: Preparation for the Decade and Launch

The WCC Central Committee will invite member churches and ecumenical partners to join the Decade to Overcome Violence. The WCC Central Committee will ask regional, ecumenical gatherings to outline their specific priorities and projects and thus to contribute to the development of the architecture; formulation of the main message; creation of an appropriate organizational framework and budget for coordination and planning; development and implementation of communication strategies; preparation for the launch.

Phase II: 2001-2004: Launch and Decade to Overcome Violence Actions In January 2001, simultaneous launches would be organized around the world, involving local congregations and groups as well as highly visible, international events. Different issues and appropriate methodologies will be used in the Decade to Overcome Violence process which are coordinated with regard to planning, communication, joint events, and common goals.

Phase III: 2004: Synthesis through Cross-Contextual Analysis and Experience

As some issues and actions continue, the WCC will facilitate exchanges between creative models of peacemaking addressed in the first three years with the aim of strengthening networks and building new alliances.

Phase IV: 2005: Analysis/Evaluation/Preparation for the Assembly and the Next Five Years

Analysis and evaluation of the first stage of the Decade to Overcome Violence will reflect on the process and assess the following questions: What are the lessons learned this far? What are the challenges to the churches? What are the churches doing? What still needs to be done? Strategic exchanges and visits will help Decade to Overcome Violence participants to listen and learn from one another. These evaluations and exchanges will contribute to the Assembly preparation and build new impetus for the Decade's second stage.

Phase V: 2005-2010: WCC Ninth Assembly

Lessons and challenges from the first part of the Decade will be shared. The focus and plan of action for 2006-2010 are finalized and adopted.

4. Possible Approaches and Methodologies

a. Study processes

Continuing and expanding the theological reflections on violence and non-violence, from the perspectives of the dignity and human rights of human beings and of the community; an ongoing and accessible Biblical study process (contextual, cross-contextual, cross-cultural); study and analysis of the work of truth and reconciliation commissions.

Engaging the churches and regional networks in reflection on violence and peace-

building in the midst of structural challenges such as racism, globalization, violence against women, violence among youth, violence against children, etc.

b. Campaigns

Providing practical support and solidarity to churches and groups in their efforts to mobilize campaigns on specific issues with defined goals to prevent, transform and overcome violence in their own contexts. Encouraging churches and organizations to network for specific international campaigns.

c. Education

Collecting, compiling, and sharing peace education curriculum for children, youth, and adults, by building on existing models, particularly from the Christian perspective, networking educators and resource people, as well as theological institutions, who are engaged in conflict resolution, transformation, and mediation. Challenging present educational systems and media which perpetuate competition, aggressive individualism and violence, especially among children.

d. Worship and Spirituality

Sharing resources and practices for worship and prayer across traditions and cultures in order to focus on our common efforts of peace-making and reconciliation. The concept of *metanoia* is particularly important as the churches take responsibility for their part in violent actions from the past and in the present. *Metanoia* encompasses confession, repentance, renewal, and celebration of faith and is therefore a foundation of a culture of peace.

e. Telling the Story - Decade "Open Space"

Sharing stories of violence, initiatives to overcome violence, and sustaining cultures of peace, churches, communities, groups, and individuals will create 'open space' through the World Wide Web, print, video, events and personal exchanges. These stories will connect people and efforts, provide support and solidarity, share resources and ideas, and provide constant input into the process and focus of the Decade, particularly for the second stage, 2006-2010.

5. Issues

"Violence" is not only physical. "Violence" is also emotional, intellectual, structural. Throughout the Decade to Overcome Violence, the focus will be on the *response and prevention* to forms of violence, <u>such as</u>:

Overcoming violence between nations

Overcoming violence within nations

Overcoming violence in local communities

Overcoming violence within the home and the family

Overcoming violence within the church

Overcoming sexual violence

Overcoming socio-economic violence

Overcoming violence as a result of economic and political blockades

Overcoming violence among youth

Overcoming violence associated with religious and cultural practices

Overcoming violence within legal systems

Overcoming violence against creation

Overcoming violence as a result of racism and ethnic hatred

III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence is meant to capture the excitement and expectations of churches, ecumenical organizations, groups and movements around the world for the positive, practical, and unique contribution of the churches to building a culture of peace. The design and methodology of the Decade to Overcome Violence should be focused and yet open to allow creativity and to utilize the dynamic energy of the churches and different groups in society. The architecture for the Decade to Overcome Violence will depend on the suggestions, plans, and leadership of the WCC's member churches and ecumenical partners who will define the issues and the processes that will lead the Decade to Overcome Violence forward.

This document will serve as a framework for preparatory steps in the Decade to Overcome Violence. Throughout the Decade, the Executive and Programme Committees will monitor the process and will sharpen the goals and methodologies.

BUDGET 1999 and 2000 COMPARISON

ing Operating (Worsening)/ et Budget Improvement 2000		158.22 (0.96)	20.00 20.00 0.00	178.22 (0.96)			(10,886,898)	14,591,068		7,000,000 3,533,530 7,000,000 7,000,000 7,533,530	21.591.068 (1.7	1,355,858	,687 2,792,482 295,795 500 1,550,500 (3,000)	5,698,840	,403 27,289,908 (1,442,495)
BUDGET 1999 and 2000 COMPARISON Budget 1999	Staff Numbers	Core Staff sub-total	Non-Core sub-total	Overall FTE	Operating Budget	Income	33 Operating Designated Income 10,886,898	5,467 erating Designated Income	ited Income	Remaining budgeted items 3,466,470	7	Dividends and Interest	37 Production & Service Income 2,496,687	AL OTHER INCOME	TOTAL INCOME 28,732,403

EXPENDITURE

40 Grants	710,300	685,000	25,300
41 Professional Fees	829,820	280,000	249,820
42 Travel and Hospitality	1,993,800	1,675,000	318,800
43 Depreciation	781,402	865,000	(83,598)
44 Hire of Premises & Equipment	147,600	146,000	1,600
45 Post, Telephony, and Freight Charges	779,253	000'069	89,253
_	1,563,151	1,470,000	93,151
47 Publishing and Production Costs	841,730	845,000	(3,270)
48 Premises and Equipment (RR&M)	753,410	750,000	3,410
49 Financial Costs	354,085	355,000	(915)
50 Core Staff Costs	18,166,933	17,530,784	636,149
52 Non-Core Staff Costs	1,303,592	1,350,000	(46,408)
60 Public Information	_	_	0
63 Governance	(1)	<u>(5)</u>	0
66 Infrastructure Costs	_	-	0
71 Transfers to or from fund	4,200	0	4,200
73 Transfers to/(from) provisions	(75,000)	0	(75,000)
74 Transfer between teams or clusters	629,290	398,123	231,167
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	28,783,567	27,339,908	1,443,659
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT FOR YEAR)	(51,164)	(20,000)	1,164
Balance Brought Forward (if applicable)	0		,
Total Income as above	28,732,403	27,289,908	(1,442,495)
Total Expenditure as above	(28,783,567)	(27,339,908)	1,443,659
Budgeted closing balance	(51,164)	(50,000)	1,164

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST*

Report of the Officers (GS1.1)
Report of the Moderator (GS1.2)
Report of the General Secretary (GS2)

Reporting on the Eighth Assembly (GS3)

Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches - final text

Mandate and Guidelines for Central Committee (GS5)

Building the post-Assembly Agenda: a perspective up to next assembly (GS6)

Procedures for dealing with Public Issues (R&C2) The Role of the WCC in International Affairs

Financial Report 1998 - World Council of Churches Yearbook 1999 - World Council of Churches

"Children and Armed Conflict" - Text of Speech given at the Africa Plenary by Dr Olara A. Otunnu, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

^{*} Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of the document; most are available in English, French, German and Spanish

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